Early Zarathushtrianism and Early Buddhism: A Comparative Study of Religious Innovation as an Occasion for Social Reform

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Sommaire

Ce mémoire présente une étude comparative entre deux mouvements réformateurs issus de la tradition aryenne (indo-iranienne): le Zoroastrisme et le Bouddhisme originels. Bien que ce travail établit l'origine commune du Zoroastrisme et du Bouddhisme, l'ambition première de cette dissertation est de démontrer l'engagement social de ces deux mouvements.

Zarathushtra et le Bouddha sont appréhendés dans ce travail comme des réformateurs qui se sont débattus contre les institutions religieuses (divinités et rites) et les systèmes sociaux de leur temps du fait que ceux-ci représentaient exclusivement les aspirations des classes dominantes, guerrières ou hiératiques.

Cet exposé s'intéresse avant tout aux messages sociaux dégagés des discours "religieux" de Zarathushtra et du Bouddha. Il vise à établir que leurs propos appuyaient l'émancipation des classes qui assuraient la prospérité économique de leur société.

Enfin, en ce qui concerne le plan de ce mémoire, les deux premières parties sont des chapitres préliminaires consacrés à des études séparées du Zoroastrisme et du Bouddhisme. Celles-ci permettront de saisir l'étude comparative entre les deux mouvements aryens recueillit dans le dernier chapitre.

Abstract

This thesis presents a comparative study between two reforming movements emanating from the Aryan (Indo-Iranian) tradition. Early Zarathushtrianism and Early Buddhism. Although this thesis establishes the common origin of Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism, the principal purpose of this research is to demonstrate the social commitment of the two movements.

Zarathushtra and the Buddha are discerned in this discussion as reformers struggling against the religious institutions (worshipped gods and observed rites) and the social system of their time as the latter represented exclusively the aspirations of the dominating knightly or priestly classes.

This treatise is primarily interested in the **social** message conveyed by Zarathushtra's and the Buddha's "religious" discourses. It aims to establish their statements as one supporting the emancipation of the classes who secured the economic prosperity of their society.

Finally, as regards the outline of this thesis, the first two sections are preliminary chapters dedicated to separate studies of Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism. They pave the way for the comparative study between the two Aryan movements recorded in the last chapter.

Preface

My initial objective was to write a master's thesis on Zarathushtrianism. However after my encounters with Buddhism through courses, lectures and discussions with my supervisor, I gravitated towards a comparative study of Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism. After realizing that there were not any extensive comparative work on this subject, I decided to undertake a short comparison of my own.

Even though this thesis concentrates primarily on historical and social aspects of religion and avoids any other debates, it contributes to the field of comparative religion, as no other work of its genre precedes it.

Finally I should add that the secondary sources on Zarathushtrianism have been selected meticulously. If some older treatises have been consulted instead of newer ones, it is only because they seemed to gather more sensible ideas. As Henning pertinently said: "It is a fallacy to think that a novel opinion is necessarily right, or an old opinion necessarily wrong."[1]

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[1]W.B.Henning, Zoroaster Politician or Witch-Doctor?, London, Oxford Univerisity Press, 1951, p.51.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

A.N.	Aṅguttara Nikāya
D.N.	Dīgha Nikāya
M.N.	Majjhima Nikāya
S.B.	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
S.N.	Saṁyutta Nikāya
RV	Ṛgveda
Y.	Yasna (of the Gathas and the Avesta)

Introduction

In earlier times social reforms were principally expressed through religion, as religion was indissolubly interlaced with everyday life.[2] The advent of any creed was usually generated by a social quest for change.[3] Comparative studies have been particularly useful in demonstrating socio-economic factors as a common point in religious reforms.[4] Iran and India are full of accounts of social upheavals which led to the blooming of new ideas and new lores.

The aim of this study is to discuss two kindred religious reforms related by a common root and to a certain extent linked by ideals. The two reforms in question are Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism, one known as the Iranian religion par excellence, and the other as Indian. However, in earlier times, about 1000 B.C. (maybe earlier), the Indians and the Iranians composed a single cultural and ethnic entity,[5] and had settled in the regions between the Oxus and the Indus Valley.[6] The linguistic similarities between the Ṛgveda and Avesta corroborated the fact that the Indo-Iranians kept their unity after the scattering of the Indo-Europeans. Both literatures contain authentic reminiscences of historical events which

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[2]J.Gonda, Triads in the Veda, Amsterdam, North-Holland Publishing Co., 1973, p.169, footnote 248.

[3]S.P.Sen, Social Contents of Indian Religious Reform Movements, Calcutta, Institute of Historical Studies, 1978, p.V, VI.

[4]Sen, op. cit., p.VI.

[5]N.S.Gorekar, Indo-Iran Relations-Cultural Aspects, Bombay, Sindhu Publications Private Ltd, 1970, p.3.

[6]Hugh G.Rawlinson, Bactria, The History of a Forgotten Empire, London, Probsthain and Co, 1912, p.20.

confirm the unity of Indo-Iranians as one nation sharing the same language, custom, and religion. The early hymns of the Ṛgveda are even believed to have been composed before the separation of Indo-Iranians. This is important to know in order to understand the relation between the socio-religious movements that occurred later in the Indo-Iranian lands.[7]

Religion, as in most ancient societies, was an intrinsic part of the lives of the Indo-Iranians.[8] These Indo-Iranians, as the Ṛgveda and the Avesta testify, were polytheists, worshipping a plurality of deities usually thirty-three in number.[9] The conception of the sovereign god varied according to the circumstances and the epoch. Usually the gods of the ruling class or the strongest clan were the most exalted.[10]

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[7]H.D.Griswold, The Religion of the Ṛgveda, Delhi, Motilal Banarisidass, 1971, p.20, p.66: "Vedic and Avestan are simply dialects of the same Indo-Iranian speech. Entire passages of Avestan can be rendered into Vedic and vice versa merely by making the necessary phonetic changes."
Paul Masson-Oursel, Helena de Willman-Grabowska, Philippe Stern, Ancient India and Indian Civilization, London, Kegan Paul and Co. Ltd, 1934, pp.16, 20.
J.S.Taraporewala, "Main Currents of Pre-Islamic Iranian Thought", Indo-Iranica, April 1953, vol.VI no.4 p.2.
W.Crooke, "Hinduism", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, New York, Charles Scribner's son, 1914, p.689.
Jean Varenne, Le Veda, Paris, Ed. Planète, 1967, p.17.
Rawlinson, op. cit., p.20.

[8]Vishwanath Prasad Varma, Early Buddhism and its Origins, New Delhi, Munshiram Mansharlal Publishers, 1973, p.5.
Sen, op. cit., p.VI.

[9]M.M.Kunte, The Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization in India, Delhi, Heritage Publishers, 1974, pp.97-98: Cf. Gathas Y.2.43.
Charles Godage, "The Place of Indra in Early Buddhism", Univerisity of Ceylon Review, April 1945, p.45 Cf. RV 8.35.

[10]Enric Aguilar I Matas, Ṛgvedic Society, Leiden, E.J.Brill, 1991, pp.47, 48.
Raoul Allier, Magie et Religion, Paris, Édition Bérger-Levrault, 1935, p.3: "La religion, nous dit-on, est conforme à l'ordre social: elle consolide cet ordre et elle l'exprime."

The Indo-Iranians bore the name Aryan (meaning "noble")[11] Frequently described as a warfaring people, they lived in a patriarchal society in which the priesthood had greatly developed.[12] However, the Rgveda which can be taken as the common foundation of Indo-Iranian civilization, alludes to an epoch when the Aryans were not characterized by war and their high god was the celestial Asura Varuna, guardian of Order and patron of Ethics.[13]

Later on, changes in the Aryan society favoured the predominance of the warfaring class over the rest of the people. Consequently the prestige of Varuna waned before a war-god, the deva Indra.[14]

The migration of and the contact with wealthier sedentarian civilizations has been suggested to have been the catalyst for the ascendance of the warrior class. Coveting the

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[11]R.C.Zaehner, The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961, p.20.
Gorekar, op. cit., p.124.
Griswold, op. cit., p.21.
Masson-Oursel, op. cit., p.16.

[12]R.Gordon Warron, Soma Divine Mushroom of Immortality, Italy, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., 1971, p.3.
Griswold, op. cit., p.9, 26.

[13]Martin Haug, Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parisis, London, Kegan Paul, 1878, p.53: "Ahuramazda can be traced back to Asura, the supreme god of Indo-Iranian times, and is the representative of Varuna, Zeus or Jupiter."
A.L.Basham, The Wonder that was India, New York, Taplinger Publishing Company, 1968, pp.238-239.
Matas, op. cit., p.45.
Griswold, op. cit., p.113.

[14]Gherardo Gnoli, Zoroaster's Time and Homeland, Naples, Instituto Univerisitario Orientale, 1980, pp.22, 69.
F.B.J.Kuiper, "Remarks on the Avestan Hymns to Mithra", Indo-Iranian Journal, 1961-62, vol.5 p.53: Defeat of Varuna submitting to Indra RV X.124.4-5.
Matas, op. cit., pp.42, 47, 151.

riches of the wealthier nations possibly stimulated the spirit of conquest, giving reason to war and raising the popularity of the martial god (Indra) among the majority.[15] The warfaring elite was to dominate the Indo-Iranian society with the support of the priestly class.[16] The warriors and the priests implemented a hierarchical social system which was to become "more and more complex as time went on."[17]

If the political and economic factors of the time had favoured the establishment of such a social system, later historical developments produced other outcomes.[18] The textual sources accessible today yield Zarathushtrianism as one of the earliest protesting movements against the established Aryan social system. Later on Buddhism evinced itself as another great Aryan movement oppugnant to a system which served the purpose of exclusive classes.[19]

Even if Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism rose at two different times of history, the religions and social systems against which they fought are remarkably comparable. After all

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[15]M.M.J. Marasinghe, Gods in Early Buddhism, Kulanaya, Univerisity of Sri Lanka, 1974, p.102.
Matas, op. cit., p.47.

[16]Matas, op. cit., p.1.
Griswold, op. cit., p.48.

[17]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.102.
Griswold, op. cit., p.45.

[18]Sen, op. cit., p.VI.

[19]Gnoli, op. cit., p.183-184, 190.

the religion in which Gotama was reared was the direct heir of that of Zarathushtra's enemies.[20]

About five centuries before the Buddha, Zarathushtra initiated a revolutionary movement which effulged in Iran and left an ineffaceable trace in the history of religion.[21] There is no precise data expressing the exact date of the advent of Zaratushtrianism, however much scriptural and linguistic evidences support the fact that Early Zarathushtrianism runs deep into the Indo-Iranian period, making numerous Ṛgvedic hymns contemporary with Zarathushtra's preaching.[22]

Zarathushtra appeared at a time when the warriors dominated society. According to the Gathic scriptures, the warriors as well as the hieratic class associated with them distinguished themselves from the rest of the people by their power and wealth. They supported a religious tradition which benefitted their classes and which justified the exploitation of the peasants and cattle breeders. Zarathushtra reacted against this religious and social system which, according to him, created profound inequalities and great injustices.

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[20] Ibid., p.184: "There is a point in which a profound likeness between Zoroastrianism and Buddhism can be noted...two spiritual doctrines that had grown out of the naturistic and polytheistic religious roots of the Aryan tribes that had settled in territories when ancient sedentary civilizations had flourished, on both sides of the Indus."

[21] Ibid., p.228.

[22] K.Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Studies in Vedic and Indo-Iranian Religion and Literature, New Delhi, Bharatiya Vidya Prakasana, 1976, vol.II p.152.
Mary Boyce, Zoroastrianism, Its Antiquity and Constant Vigour, Costa Mesa (Calif.), Mazda Publishers, preface.
Gnoli, op. cit., p.20, 161.
Haug, op. cit., p.288.
Taraporewala, op. cit., pp.2-3.

He denigrated the gods chosen to the image of the warfaring class. He opposed their cult, which was a means to enhance the prestige of the hieratic class. By denigrating their eminent god and their rituals, Zarathushtra had questioned the social distinctions of the warfaring and priestly class.[23]

The first chapter of this study will primarily situate Zarathushtra in his historical context and determine the Indo-Iranian nature of his lore before defining his opposition to the dominating Aryan religion. We will observe the terms in which the nature and character of the head god were incompatible with Zarathushtra's ethics. Zarathushtra's religion was also characterized by an anti-sacrificial emphasis. Zarathushtra was particularly concerned with the perpetration of cattle sacrifice and the rite of Soma,[24] which as it will be expounded served only the purpose of the warrior and priestly classes. Zarathushtra held these two groups responsible for the social and religious malpractices of which the victims were the "law-abiding" classes of farmers and grazers.[25] His reform went far beyond the religious sphere. He extolled the work of the husbandmen and aspired to a society in which all people,

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[23]Gnoli, op. cit., pp.53, 69, 79, p.156: "Toute sa propagande est...dirigée contre les athravans (prêtres), desservants attirés d'un culte qu'il abhorre." p.157.

[24]S.A.Nigosian, The Zoroastrian Faith: Tradition and Modern Research, Montreal, McGill-Queen's Univerisity Press, 1993, pp.19-20.
C.Bartholomae, "Zarathushtra: His Life and Doctrine", Indo-Iranian Studies, London, Kegan Paul and Co., 1925, pp.3-5.

[25]J.N.Talukdar, "Relations between Indians and Iranians in Prehistoric Times", Indo-Iranica, March-December 1974, vol.27 no.1-4 p.22.
Boyce, op. cit., p.38.

independent of their social status, contribute to the work of the land. At this point it will be established that the Aryan reformer preached a religion for the renewal of his society.[26]

The Buddha's reform like that of Zarathushtra's was twofold: religious and social.[27] Buddhism appeared centuries after the separation of Indians and Iranians, at a period when monarchies were growing to the detriment of the independent tribal republics.[28] The political power was being more and more concentrated in the hands of the king who identified himself with the gods.[29] The sacerdotal class shared the preponderant position with the warrior class (*kṣatriya*). Both classes jointly took advantage of the lower stratas of the society to whom they had confined the task to produce their welfare.[30] Although the rulers were still composed of the warrior class, the sacerdotal class thanks to its spiritual and intellectual dominance had seized the opportunity to clarify the leadership of the Aryan community.[31] One of the

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[26]Paul du Breuil, Zarathushtra et la Transfiguration du Monde, Paris, Payot, 1978, p.61 Cf.Y.30.9.
Gnoli, op. cit., p.79, 183.

[27]D.D.Kosambi, Ancient India A History of its Culture and Civilization, New York, Pantheon Books, 1965, p.106: "Buddhism was the most social of religions."
Uma Chakravarti, The Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism, Oxford, Oxford Univerisity Press, 1987, p.97.
Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., p.106.
Gnoli, op. cit., p.69.

[28]Chakravarti, op. cit., p.10.

[29]Ibid., p.7.

[30]Ibid., p.170, Cf.Dīgha Nikāya I p.9.

[31]W.Crooke, "Hinduism", Encyclopaedia of Relgion and Ethics, New York, Charles Scribner's son, 1914, p.687.
Hermann Oldenberg, Buddha, His Life, His Doctrine, His Order, London, Williams and Norgate, 1882, p.13.

intentions of Early Buddhism was to uproot a system which was profitable only to one category of people, excluding the majority. The Buddha yearned for a religion that was universally accessible and did not see any justification for social distinctions determined by birth.[32] The Buddha disparaged the traditional religion which had gods accessible through costly priests.[33] In his philosophy, religion had to be removed from the spheres of power and war.[34]

In the second chapter of this study, after having historically contexualized Buddhism, we will present the Buddha's concept of heavenly beings and the amendments he brought to the position of the gods. The second point to be treated regards the Buddha's denigration of the old cult with all its sacrificial rituals. We will see that the caste system is impaired by the devaluation of gods and rituals, noting that their revocation jeopardized the position of the clergy.[35] The third point will assess the impact of the Buddha's religious redefinition on the society. It will be demonstrated that the Buddha's social philosophy responded to the

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K.T.S.Sarao, The Origin and Nature of Ancient Indian Buddhism, Delhi, Eastern Book Linkers, 1989, p.10.

[32]Kosambi, op. cit., p.113.

[33]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.37.

[34]Chakravarti, op. cit., p.170.
Marasinghe, op. cit., p.31, 39.

[35]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.37.

expectations of new rising classes with increasing economic power for whose social ascendance the Brahmanic caste system was an obstacle.[36]

The three points studied in each of the two first chapters will be recapitulated in the last section devoted entirely to a comparative study of Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism. The main issues elaborated in the preceding chapters will be reviewed and confronted. We will expound aspects which pertain to Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism and points which differentiate them.

Once again, the theistic views of both religions will be the first matter considered. We will observe the common points between the Zarathushtrian and Buddhist denigration of the Aryan devas, namely, that of Indra. Each creed has a different way of approaching the issue, considering that Zarathushtrianism simply rejected the devas, while Buddhism tolerated the devas after having them metamorphosized.[37] The second part of this chapter will treat the antagonistic attitude of both wisemen towards the existing rituals. This is the point which reconciles the most Early Zarathushtrianism to Early Buddhism, considering that both religions developed an anti-sacrificial attitude.

The last point to be viewed is the impact of the religious reforms on their respective societies. The social distinctions were questioned in both Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism, although Zarathushtra and the Buddha were not affected by the upper classes of priests and warriors in the same way. It will be observed that the difference in economic conditions and

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[36]Kosambi, op. cit., p.100.
Varma, op. cit., p.333.

[37]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.IX.

the hardening of class divisions[38] from Zarathushtra's epoch to the Buddha's time had notable effects on their new stratification of the society.

Before commencing the main core of this study it should be specified that this research is only concerned with **Early** Zarathushtrianism and **Early** Buddhism. The later developments of both religions will not be discussed here, as this would require a separate study.[39]

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[38]Basham, op. cit., p.35.

[39]The counter-reform to Zarathushtrianism and later reforms in Buddhism, brought about changes which diverted these creeds from their initial vocation. They often restored earlier beliefs and practices against which the original movement had strived.
Zaehner, op. cit., pp.28-29: "It is true that in other religions we find later accretions added to the original deposit of faith, but in no other does the original doctrine appear to have been so radically changed as in the earlier phases of Zoroastrianism...with changed political conditions, much of the "paganism" and its attendant polytheism which preceded the reform crept back into the religion that was now associated with the name of Zarathushtra."

Chapter 1: Zarathushtrianism, a Reform for Religion and Society[40]

Zarathushtrianism, an Indo-Iranian Religion

Zarathushtrianism has traditionally been considered the property of the Iranians. This idea has been based on the fact that Zarathushtrianism was the official religion of the only two dynasties innate to Perisia (Achaemenides after the reign of Artaxerxes I {465-425 B.C.} until 330 B.C. and the Sassanides {224-651 A.D.}).[41] This thesis is not going to be denied, but many religions have been exported from their original birthplace and moreover some have practically vanished from their native land. Has this not been the case for Buddhism and to a certain extent true for Christianity?[42] In addition, linguistically the genuine Zarathushtrian scriptures were much closer to the ancient Indian scriptures than the subsequent languages (viz. Old Perisian, Pahlavi etc...) spoken in the Iranian Plateau.

It is generally accepted that Zarathushtrianism appeared outside the Iranian Plateau, and originated in the eastern boundaries of Iran as the geographical and linguistic indications

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[40]The first chapter of this thesis was presented as a paper to the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion and was granted the graduate student best essay prize. Please refer to the appendix.

[41]Zaehner, op. cit., p.21-22.

[42]Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya, Hindu Castes and Sects, Calcutta, Ed. Indian, 1968, p.409.

of the Avestas disclose.[43] It is also true that in ancient times the confines of Eastern Iran merged into those of Northern India with no determined frontiers and the Iranian and Indian Aryans were not distinguished as separate nations. Like the Dorians and the Ionians which were known as Hellenes, the Iranians and the Indians were referred to as Aryans.[44] Zarathushtra himself was called "the famous in the Aryan Home".[45]

Thus Zarathushtrianism appeared, with high probability, at a time when the Indo-Iranians pertained to a common ethnic group.[46] Zarathushtra preached somewhere in East of Iran, North-West of India, at the time when *Ṛṣis* were arranging their Ṛgvedic hymns. The Ṛgvedic hymns being collected at different times between 1500 B.C. and 900 B.C., Zarathushtra probably composed his hymns in this lapse of time. A substantial number of scholars adhere to such a theory a posteriori as it is substantiated by linguistic and cultural facts.[47]

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[43]Khojeste Mistree, Zoroastrianism, an Ethnic Perspective, Bombay, Zoroastrian Studies, 1982, p.9: "It is also important to bear in mind that Zarathushtra's hymns, the Gathas are in an Eastern Iranian language."
Bartholomae, op. cit., p.6.
Boyce, op. cit., p.17. It is mentioned in the Zartusht Nama that Zarathushtrianism originated outside the Iranian Plateau.
Griswold, op. cit., p.22.

[44]Haug, op. cit., pp.69-70: "The languages of the (Vedas) and of those of the (Avesta) are only the two dialects of two seperate tribes of one and the same nation."
D.D.Kosambi, op. cit., p.73, 76.

[45]Haug, op. cit., p.299.

[46]Bartholomae, op. cit., p.8.

[47]Kellens and Pirart, Les Textes Vieil-Avestiques, Wiesbaden, Dr Ludwig Reichert, 1988, vol.2 pp.13, 20.
Ali A.Jafarey, The Message of Zarathushtra as Understood from his Songs, Tehran, Sazman-

Based on the above statements much of the endless speculations on Zarathushtra's time and homeland can be left aside. According to this evidence, Zarathushtrianism can be recognized as an Indian religion as much as it is reputed to be Iranian.[48] Zarathushtrianism would have emerged somewhere in the second millennium before the Christian era at a time when Indo-Iranians were undivided.

Zarathushtra and his World

The Ṛgveda and the non-Gathic scriptures of the Avestas give a clear insight into the early traditions and beliefs of the Indo-Iranians.[49] The Gathas, on the other hand, which reflect with relative certitude the true words of Zarathushtra, are more concerned with the

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e-Faravahar, 1982, p.16.
J.P.Mallory, In Search of Indo-Europeans: Language, Archeology, and Myth, London, Thames and Hudson, 1991, p.42.
K.F.Geldner, "Perisia", Encyclopaedia Britannica, Cambridge, 1911, vol.21 p.247.
Boyce, op. cit., preface, pp.29, 30: "The first collection of the (Ṛgvedic) hymns were made about 1500 B.C. with the whole collection being complete by 900 B.C."
Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., vol.2 pp.102, 152: "The agreements between the language of the Avesta particularly of the Gathas of Zarathushtra and the Ṛgveda Saṁhitā, make it extremely difficult to remove him (Zarathushtra) from the Vedic period."
Gnoli, op. cit., p.161.
Griswold, op. cit., pp.2, 19, 25, 68.
Gorekar, op. cit., preface and p.5.
Haug, op. cit., p.161.

[48]J.S.Taraporewala, "Main Currents of Pre-Islamic Iranian Thoughts", Indo-Iranica, April 1953, vol.VI no.4, pp.2-3.
Bartholomae, op. cit., p.8.
Griswold, op. cit., p.116.

[49]Zaehner, op. cit., p.39.

negative outcomes of the Aryan religion. They portray the latter in terms of how it was carried out by the empowered classes and consequently these texts are not garbed in purely religious apparel but convey a message of "far-reaching political consequences".[50]

Naturally the rejection of the head god and the denigration of an entire pantheon could not have remained devoid of consequences. After all "religion had almost an universal and comprehensive sway over the lives and minds of people;...in ancient times even political battles were fought in the name of religion."[51]

Zarathushtra's epoch was that of epopees. The Ṛgveda like the Homeric hymns celebrated heros and their heroic gestures in battles. Many of these heros were then raised to the level of gods. Most of the Indo-Iranian gods, Griswold says, were patterned after the nobility which was then represented by warriors.[52] Indra was one of these heros. He was the deified verision of the Aryan leader. Indra led the warriors to war and guaranteed the courageous heavenly life. Indra had nothing to do with the peasantry.[53]

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[50]Kellens and Pirart, op. cit., p.22, 26.
Bartholomae, op. cit., p.1.
Gathas, Y.48.5: "May good rulers, not bad ones, rule over us!" (Duchesne-Guillemin's translation).

[51]Varma, op. cit., p.5.

[52]Griswold, op. cit., p.47.

[53]Griswold, op. cit., p.47, 196: "The reference to historical events are confined largely to the military exploits."
Marasinghe, op. cit., pp.7, 8, 69.
Haug, op. cit., p.288.
Boyce, op. cit., p.38.

The central feature of the religion of these Aryan warriors was sacrifices through which the deities were invoked.[54] The priesthood was in charge of the sacrifices necessary for success in war. These rituals were costly and included animal slaughtering associated with the consumption of the fermented Soma juice. The necessity of the sacrifices for the warrior class enhanced the power of the hieratic class. With the ecclesiasticals, the military aristocracy bound the peasantry to servitude, as they were considered incapable of fulfilling any other important role in a martial society.[55]

Zarathushtra emerged to found a religion which contrasted with the existing social system in which the warrior clans were regal.[56] His social reform could not have been expedient if it was void of religious message for "all the social and political movements of his time were centred round religion".[57]

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[54]Varma, op. cit., p.55.

[55]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.31.
Zaehner, op. cit., p.38.
Gnoli, op. cit., 186.

[56]Gnoli, op. cit., p.69.
Gathas, Y.48.10: "When, O Mazda, will the warriors understand the message?" (Duchesne-Guillemin's translation).

[57]N.Schmidt, "Problems Concerning the Origins of Some of the Great Oriental Religions", Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1933, pp.19-24.

The Repudiation of Indra, The Execration of all Devas

The war god Indra was incontestably an important deity in the Indo-Iranian lands of yore.[58] His preeminence in several Ṛgvedic hymns evinces the hegemony of the warrior class over the others. Indra incarnated the warrior leader par excellence,[59] and he has been suggested to represent "a deified ancestral war leader" or "a succession of such active human chiefs".[60]

Indra was the archetype of the mobile warrior-aristocracy.[61] His numerous epithets were related to killing and destruction. He was **purbhid** "fort-shatterer" (RV I.51.5). He was referred to as **puraṁdara** "breaker of cities". One of Indra's heroic feats was the breaking of the dams.[62] The fortress cities or dams alluded to were those of the settled agrarian people, of whom the destruction was being celebrated. There are frequent evocations of captured

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[58]Govind C.Pande, Studies in the Origins of Buddhism, Delhi, Motilal Banarisidass, 1974, p.267: "(Indra) is clearly as old as the Indo-Iranian times since the Verethraghana of the Avesta and the Vahagn of Armenians are clearly the same as the Vṛtrahan of the Ṛgveda Saṁhitā."

[59]Griswold, op. cit., p.48.
Marasinghe, op. cit., p.72.

[60]Griswold, op. cit., p.201: "Indra incarnates a man of action who does great deeds, but commits many faults in doing them."
Kosambi, op. cit., p.78.

[61]RV 1.54.7-8: "Thou goest from fight intrepidly, destroying castle after castle here with strenght. Thou Indra slewest...thou hast struck down..." (Griffith's translation).

[62]Godage, op. cit., p.49.
Marasinghe, op. cit., p.3, 8.
Kosambi, op. cit., p.79.

"strongholds" generally not belonging to the Aryans (RV IV.26.3).[63] The cult held in honour of Indra was modelled in all probability on the ceremonies destined to the warrior chief. Indra was "endowed with all the qualities attributed to the ideal chief" and with rituals conferred to a real chief. The rite celebrated before any martial excurision was consecrated to Indra as well as to the head chief. Indra is believed to be a mythologized human being and the mythological individuals he fought were mythologized leaders of other tribes. In sum Indra was a warrior leader who led Aryans to war. The deification of a war leader implies clearly the religious fervour with which these battles were fought.[64]

Indra was regarded as a benevolent distributor of treasures he took by force, like a warrior leader distributing the stolen booty.[65] He is actually described impelling warrior nations to search booty. Through Indra's assistance the Aryans won cattle (RV VI.26.2) and cornland (RV VI.20.1):[66]

> Now when the Bharatas have crossed thee (the river) safely, Indra impelled a horde in search of booty...The booty-seeking Bharatas crossed over...
> (RV III.33.11-12 Griswold's translation)

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[63]Griswold, op. cit., p.45.
Marasinghe, op. cit., p.8.
Pande, op. cit., p.253.

[64]Matas, op. cit., p.151.
Marasinghe, op. cit., pp.70, 102.
Griswold, op. cit., p.43.
Haug, op. cit., pp.291-292.

[65]Abel Bergaigne, La Religion Védique d'après les Hymnes du Rig-Veda, Paris, H.Champion, 1963, vol.3, pp.78-79.
Marasinghe, op. cit., p.70.

[66]Griswold, op. cit., p.195.

This verse is very instructive for understanding Zarathushtra's reaction against Indra and his worshippers. The Bharatas supported in this verse by Indra were a cattle-raiding band;[67] on the other hand, Zarathushtra had declared himself the supporter of the husbandry whose cattle was being plundered and had alleged: "We have renounced all robber-gangs, both devas and men (Y.34.5 Moulton's translation)."[68]

Indra is never alluded to as a peaceful deity; he is associated with violence and his insignia is a terrible weapon identified with thunder.[69] Indra acted as the profaner of agrarian fields, encouraged cattle plundering and symbolized destruction
and war. He was a god exclusive to the warfaring class.[70] Zarathushtra who preached for the security of the herdsmen and militated for a universal god of wisdom could not have been left indifferent to Indra's exploits, especially that the eminent deva was probably the chief god during his life time.[71]

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[67]Ibid., p.189.

[68]Gathas, Y.29.5, Y.31.10, Y.33.3, Y.33.6.

[69]Gonda, Triads in the Veda, op. cit., p.204: RV 1.52.6.
Godage, op. cit., p.51.

[70]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.8.
Griswold, op. cit., pp.199-200.

[71]Haug, op. cit., p.288: "...at the time when Indra was the chief god of the brahmans...before the brahmans had immigrated into Hindustan proper." Cf. Y.31.15.
Gnoli, op. cit., pp.69, 188-189.
Bartholomae, op. cit., p.13.

It is under his most characteristic epithet, **Vṛtrahan**, that Indra is in all likelihood evoked and repudiated in the Gathas (Y.44.16 K V r θr m jā θsā pōi s nghā yōi h nti).[72] Zarathushtra alludes to his function as "breaker of obstacles" which is the literal meaning of **Vṛtrahan**, and he wonders whose assistance he could solicit in case of battle since he had proscribed Indra.[73] In the later Avesta, Indra is reduced to the status of a demon.[74]

Even though no deva other than Indra/Vṛtrahan and Soma are explicitly mentioned in the Gathas, the devas in general are repudiated.[75] In fact it would be helpful to refer to the Ṛgveda to understand Zarathushtra's reaction. The Ṛgvedic hymns attributed to the warfaring groups (Suri) put Indra at the head of all devas, and moreover represent the deity as the deva par excellence. All the other devas, at least the important ones such as Agni and Soma were

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[72]J.Gonda, The Dual Deities in the Religion of the Veda, Amsterdam, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1974, p.272.
Kosambi, op.cit., p.79: "Indra was called Vṛtrahan, Vṛtra-Killer. The word vṛtra means literally obstacle or barrier."
Kellens and Pirart, op. cit., p.27.
Griswold, op. cit., p.180.

[73]Kellens and Pirart, op. cit., p.27.
Ṛgveda 1.4.6.

[74]Avesta, Vendidad X.9.

[75]Gnoli, op. cit., p. 74: "The condemnation of daevas included both Iranian and Indo-Iranian gods."
Boyce, op. cit., p.72: ""Zoroaster was led to active denunciation of the Daevas, with at their head, as the Young Avesta shows, the probably by then great Indra."
Matas, op. cit., p.63, p.69: "Devas were the gods of warlike Aryan groups."

not incipiently (at their initial stage) devas although they were important gods (asuras). They became devas from the moment they joined Indra in his enterprises.[76]

Finally Varuna was also too important a god to be ignored by the partisans of Indra. The Vedic hymns composed by them recount that the great Asura yielded to Indra's authority.[77] Following these mythological evolutions, Zarathushtra could not have adopted Varuna under its current form if he wanted to meet the inspirations of the agricultural community.[78] Zarathushtra had to distinguish his Asura from the defeated Varuna. He divested the great Asura of any name, he "defined" him instead as Lord of Wisdom (*Ahura Mazda*).[79] Guardian of Ethics and Justice (RV 2.28.6, RV 2.28.9, Y.51.4), the Great Asura was restored to militate actively on the side of the agrarian class.[80] And this dispenser of

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[76]Matas, op. cit., pp.63, 74, 76, 92, 153. Cf. RV 10.124.3, RV 10.124.4, RV 9.97.41. Zaehner, op. cit., p.37: "In the Ṛgveda...the greatest of the devas is Indra."

[77]F.B.J.Kuiper, "Ahura Mazda, Lord Wisdom", Indo-Iranian Journal, June-July 1976, vol.18 p.34: "This is due to the fact that in the cosmogony Agni and Soma, like Varuna, had gone over from the promordial world of the Father Asura to the "foreign lineage of Devas".
F.B.J.Kuiper, "Remarks on the Avestan Hymns to Mithra", Indo-Iranian Journal, 1961-1962, vol.5 p.53: Defeat of Varuna submitting to Indra Cf. RV 10.124.4-5.
Matas, op. cit., p.53 Cf. RV 4.42.2: "I Varuna am Indra..."

[78]J.H.Moulton, The Treasure of the Magi, A Study of Modern Zoroastrianism, London, Oxford Univerisity Press, 1917, p.14.
Kuiper, Remarks on the Avestan Hymns, op. cit., p.54: "Zarathushtra renames Varuna..."

[79]Robert W.Rogers, A History of Ancient Perisia: from its Earliet Beginnings to the Death of Alexander the Great, New York, Scribner, 1929, p.22: "(Ahura Mazda) is not really a name, it is a definition rather of the being of god."

[80]Gathas, Y.29.3: Ahura Mazda says " Strongest of beings is he to whose help I come at call". Y.29.5: And Ahura Mazda continues: "Destruction is not for the right-living nor for the cattle-tenders at hands of the liars."
Duchesne-Guillemin, The Hymns of Zarathushtra, London, J.Murray, 1952, p.139.

justice became a victorious god who protected the powerless.[81] Contrary to Indra who incited to war, the wise Asura restored order. He was attended by peaceful powers of nature, Earth (*Armaiti*), Water (*Haurvatāt* Cf.Y.33.8), Plants (*Ameretāt* Cf.Y.33.8) and Patron of Cattle (*Vohū Manah* Cf.Y.47.3), all elements to which the husbandmen was able to relate.[82] Agni's fire cult was preserved in the Gathas as a symbol for Ahura Mazda and aša (Order) (Y.31.9). Agni's cult was retained probably because it was not associated with the bellicose classes and was possibly a simple rite commonly performed among the agrarian classes. However Agni was evoked in the Gathas under a different name (*Atar*) presumably to dissociate him from his devic nature.[83] On the contrary Soma's cult was not maintained and Soma's name was ignored leaving in Zarathushtra's hymns two remarkable references to its cult, once expressed with its epithet **Duraosa** (Y.32.14) the "Averter of Death" and another time as **Muthrem Madahya** (Y.48.10) the "Urine [filthiness] of this Intoxicant":[84]

> To his (Zarathushtra's) undoing Grehma and the Kavis have long devoted their purposes and energies, for they set themselves to help the False, and that

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[81]Gathas, Y.34.5: "O Mazdah protect your poor man." Moulton's translation. Y.51.1.

[82]Gathas, Y.48.6: "She (Armaiti) will give us a peaceful dwelling...For it (the cattle) Mazdah Ahura made the plants to grow..." (Moulton's translation).
Antoine Meillet, Trois Conférences sur les Gathas de l'Avesta, Paris, P.Geuthner, 1925, p.67.

[83]Griswold, op. cit., p. 152-3 Cf. footnote: "Atar is referred to seven times in the Gathas". Kosambi, op. cit., p.77: "Only the Indo-Iranian god of fire (Agni) remained in commom worship for both (Indo-Iranians)."
Bartholomae, op. cit., p.10.

[84]James Hope Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, London, Williams and Norgate, 1913, p.140. Bartholomae, op. cit., p.5: "It is true that Haoma also is not specifically mentioned in the Gathas but there are clear and unmistakable allusions to it and to its cult in that work; and these are couched in words which plainly reveal Zarathushtra's disgust for it."

it may be said "The Ox shall be slain, that it may kindle the Averter of Death
to help us".

(Y.32.14 Moulton's translation)

When, O Mazda, will the warriors understand the message? When wilt thou
smite this filthiness (urine) of drink through which the Karapans evilly deceive
and the wicked lords of lands with purpose fell?

(Y.48.10 Moulton's translation)

The Soma Cult: Warfaring Rituals and Zarathushtra

Duraosa is the "standing epithet" of *Haoma* (the Avestan name of Soma) in the later Avesta when the cult reappears after the counter-reform.[85] The Ṛgveda also ascertains that Averter of Death incarnates Soma as Soma gives immortality: "We have drunk Soma, have become immortal" (RV VIII.48.3 Griswold's translation). Soma appears as "urine" in verse RV IX.74.4 where the priests designated to represent Indra and Vayu after having ingested the Soma urinate Soma, and the urine is still considered as Soma.[86]

Leaving aside the concordance between the Indian and Iranian sources, the Soma cult, as it could be observed from the two Yasnas, is in disfavour in the Gathas and for numerous reasons. First, Soma was principally a liturgical deity, and its cult was, if not the most, one of the most important in the Indo-Iranian tradition.[87] On the other hand Zarathushtra's philosophy was not sympathetic to rituals. Even if he tolerated harmless rituals he did not

[85]Avesta, Y.9.16.

[86]Warron, op. cit., p.30.

[87]Griswold, op. cit., p.209.
Matas, op. cit., p.76.

invest in a ritualistic religion as did its Aryan fellows.[88] Secondly, the Soma ritual gathered in itself the worship of all devas, the gods dismissed by Zarathushtra.[89] Indra being the principle deva, Soma was thoroughly associated with him,[90] the only deva besides Soma explicitly repudiated in the Gathas. Soma is referred to as Indra's soul (RV IX.85.3, RV I.84.1), and as Indra's terrible weapon (RV IX.72.7, RV I.84.1), and above all Soma was Indra's drink par excellence. It was only after drinking Soma that Indra got "full command of his faculties" and was stimulated to perform his martial exploits.[91] According to Haug, priests of the warrior aristocracy in Zarathushtra's time held a Soma sacrifice in honour of Indra as a preliminary to their plunderous excursions and as such they secured his assistance.[92] Soma was to be offered to Indra without whose assistance warriors cannot have been victorious (RV II.12.8), and Zarathushtra, as observed earlier, acknowledged Indra's

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[88]Rogers, op. cit., p.24.
Nigosian, op. cit., p.18.
Moulton, op. cit., p.118.
Boyce, op. cit., p74.
Gnoli, op. cit., p.22.

[89]Ṛgveda 8.2.18: "The devas seek him who presses out the Soma." (Griffith's translation).
Nigosian, op. cit., p.20. Cf. Y.32.4.
Griswold, op. cit., p.50.
Zaehner, op. cit., p.88.

[90]Zaehner, op. cit., p.88.

[91]Griswold, op. cit., pp.195, 231.
Gonda, op. cit., pp.335, 337.

[92]Haug, op. cit., pp.291-292: The warrior aristocrarcy "never engaged itself in the frequent predatory excurisions before having previously secured the assistance of Indra by preparing for him a solemn Soma feast."

competency (Y.44.16). Soma was the means to become invincible not only for Indra but also for human warriors. Drunk by warriors the race to plunder cattle and crop followed.[93]

Indra did not content himself with the intoxicating Soma, he was a mighty eater (RV X.28.3) and called for the flesh of bulls and buffaloes:[94]

When thou (Indra) three hundred buffaloes' flesh hadst eaten...
(RV V.29.7, RV V.29.8 Griffith's translation)

As the Gathas and the Ṛgveda testify, during the Soma rites held in honour of Indra, animal sacrifices took place. The cult is described as orgiastic, violent and cruel (Y.32.12.), because of the use of the intoxicant Soma, cattle slaughtering, and the joy in seeing the Ox suffer. Zarathushtra rebuked the violence involved in the Soma rituals, namely because he believed the intoxicant to encourage violence against cattle: "The cow is to be killed for who has been kindling the *Hoama* (Y.32.14 Insler's translation)." [95]

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[93]Alfred Hillebrandt, Vedic Mythology, Delhi, Motilal Banarisidass, 1980, p.153: "Just as in his battles against Vṛtra, Indra acquires the strength through Soma, so does the prince, to whose Soma sacrifice Indra comes, gain the power to strike his enemies." Cf. RV XIII.92.17. Ṛgveda VI.26.2, RV IV.20.1.

[94]Griswold, op. cit., pp.184-185.

[95]Philip Kreyenboek, "Mithra and Ahreman, Binyamin and Malak Tawus", Recurrent Patterns in Iranian Religions from Mazdeism to Sufism, Paris, Association pour l'Avancement des Etudes Iraniennes, 1992, p.64: "Zoroastrianism must implicitly have denied the...links between Cosmogony and Sacrifices from the beginning."
Duchesne-Guillemin, op. cit., p.38: Cf. Y.48.10.
Matas, op. cit., pp.105, 118, 126. The particularity of the Soma cult was that it embodied the notion of creative immolation. The Soma rite was a commemoration of the sacrifice of the Cosmic Bull which led to the creation of the world. For this reason bulls were sacrificed during this ritual.
Griswold, op. cit., p.195. Cf. RV VIII.43.4.
Bartholomae, op. cit., p.13.
Zaehner, op. cit., pp.38, 89.

Zarathushtra was opposed to the sacrifice of oxen, but it is more likely that he opposed animal sacrifice in general,[96] in any case this is the understanding we get from James Darmesteter's translation of Yasna 32.12: "Mazda les maudit...ceux qui massacrent les animaux de gaité de coeur." It has also been observed that in numerous passages of the Gathas the closeness of man and beast are evoked:[97]

> So we reverence the soul and Maker of the cow.[98] Then we reverence our own souls and those of domestic animals... and the souls of wild creatures, in so far as they are not harmful.
>
> (Yasna 39.1, 39.2 Boyce's translation)

It is true that the Gathas are more concerned about the cow and its suffering than any other animal. The main reason is that the common herdsman's existence depended on cattle.[99] Zarathushtra blames *Yima* (the first legendary mortal and king) son of *Vivahvant* to have introduced the bull sacrifice,[100] and to be the initiator of meat eating:

Nigosian, op. cit., pp.19-20.

[96]Roman Ghirsman, L'Iran des Origines à l'Islam, Paris, Payot, 1951, p.142.
Gnoli, op. cit., p.152.

[97]Boyce, op. cit., p.32.

[98]The chosen term for the cow varies from one author to the other e.g. bull, ox...

[99]Zaehner, op.cit., p.34.
Haug, op. cit., p.147-148.
Bartholomae, op. cit., p.13.
Gathas, Y.29.1, Y.29.2, Y.29.7, Y.29.9, Y.32.8, Y.32.10, Y.32.12, Y.32.14, Y.33.3, Y.33.4, Y.44.20, Y.48.5, Y.51.14.
S.B.3.1.4.14: "Cattle means prosperity or nourishment." S.B.3.7.1.20: "Cattle means food." S.B.2.1.1.7: "Cow-dung surcharges the earth with sap; hence cow-dung is collected (for cultivation)."

[100]Zaehner, op. cit., pp.134, 139.
Hillebrandt, op. cit., p.14.

> In these sins, we know, *Yima* was involved, *Vivahvant*'s son, who desiring to satisfy men gave our people flesh of the ox to eat. From these shall I be separated by thee, O Mazdah, at last.
>
> (Yasna 32.8 Moulton's translation)

A Socio-Political Movement in Dissidence

- Soma the Elitist Cult

Nevertheless if *Yima* had introduced the bull sacrifice, his father *Vivahvant* (originally a sun god) was the one to have introduced the Soma ritual,[101] which was then to become the ritual reserved for the elite. Those who were not eligible to participate in the Soma cult were penalized, not because they could not simply drink from the Soma but because they were forced to offer a bull to Indra. It was the cattle of the poor herdsmen which was offered to Indra in the cults and not those of the warrior or priestly elite. The Soma cult as far as it is known was meant for the warrior aristocracy and the clergy. In the battle field Soma succoured only those of *kṣatriya* (warrior) blood: "Never aids Soma him whose ways are crooked; Nor him who falsely claims the kṣatriya title (RV VII.104.13 Griffith's translation)." Soma had an aristocracy of its own; one had to be wealthy enough to possess food supplies

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It is interesting to see this legendary person appear both in the Gathas (Y.32.8) and the Ṛgveda, RV 10.14.1: "Honour the king with thine oblations, Yama, Vivaśvan's son." (Griffith's translation).

[101]Nigosian, op. cit. pp.19, 27. Cf. Avesta Y.9.10, Y.17.30, Y.19.32, Y.19.33, Y.32.8.

for many years to be invited to drink the beverage of immortality. Thus the Soma sacrifice was not open to the masses.[102]

While his priesthood gave him prestige and notoriety in the society (Cf.Y.33.6), Zarathushtra had decided to side with the "third state" and leave aside his prerogatives.[103] He therefore did not take part in the elitist Soma cult, rejecting it for being a preliminary to violence and cattle slaughtering,[104] apart from being a discriminatory cult.

In a pastoral and agrarian society like that of Zarathushtra's the cow was a precious resource.[105] Zarathushtra's defense of cattle consisted of more than just opposing bloodshed caused by sacrifices; it also ensured protection of the goods of the herdsmen who as we saw were not allowed to take part in the Soma cult and had to give away their cattle. The Soma

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[102]Hillebrandt, op. cit., pp.172-174: "The character of an aristocratic exclusiveness finds expression in the so-called Dasapeya, a sacrifice that can be regarded as the joint celebration of a Soma nobility because the organisers of this sacrifice must belong to an uninterrupted line of Soma-drinking ancestors."
Katyayana Srauta Sutra IX.8.16: "After they have enumerated a line of ten Soma-drinking ancestors, they crawl."
Gonda, Triads in the Veda, op. cit., p.109: "The man who possesses a supply for three years or more is worthy to drink the Soma juice." Cf. Yajna 1.124; Manu 11.7.
Moulton, Treasure of the Magi, p.30.
Griswold, op. cit., p.212.

[103]Bartholomae, op. cit., p.7.
Gathas, Y.46.2, 29.3. Zarathushtra declared to be impoverished.

[104]Bartholomae, op. cit., p.13.

[105]Gathas, Y.47.3: "Thou...has, O Mazda, created for us the cattle, the source of prosperity." (Duchesne-Guillemin's translation).
Pande, op. cit., p.262: "The early Vedic Aryans led a life of mixed pastoral and agricultural economy."

cult was therefore a pretext to despoil the cattle breeder of his cattle (Cf.Y.48.3). In sum the ruling class levied a tribute by force from the working class in the name of religion.[106]

- The Double-Elite and the "Third-State"

Henning stated: "In pursuit of (his) aim (Zarathushtra) got into conflict with the ruling classes, the great landowners, noblemen and priests",[107] those who actually took advantage of the peasantry.[108] Zarathushtra's society was already divided between the three classes, and from his words we know that "the ruling classes or the great landowners", to use Henning's words, were part of the warrior aristocracy associated with the hieratical class.[109] Yasna 48.10 is very demonstrative of this situation where the warriors and their priests (*karapans*) are dominating and abusing the country:

> When, O Mazda, will the warriors understand the message? When wilt thou smite the filthiness of drink (Soma) Through which the sacrificers (*karapans*) evilly deceive And the evil masters of the countries of their own will commit their deeds of malice?
>
> (Yasna 48.10 Duchesne-Guillemin's translation)

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[106]Moulton, Treasure of the Magi, op. cit., p.30.
Bartholomae, op. cit., p.13.
Kellens and Pirart, op. cit., p.30.

[107]Walter B.Henning, Zoroaster, Politicians or Witch-Doctor, London, Oxford Univerisity Press, 1951, p.5.

[108]Boyce, op. cit., p.37.

[109]Bartholomae, op. cit., p.12.
Zaehner, op. cit., p.34.
Griswold, op. cit., pp.47-50.
Gnoli, op. cit., p.228.

The Gathas disclose that Zarathushtra had attracted the wrath of the ruling classes, warrior nobility and priestly elite included, and therefore he had to flee his land:

> To what land shall I go to flee, whither to flee? From nobles and my peers (other priests) they sever me, nor are the people pleased with me..., nor the Liar rulers of the land...
>
> (Yasna 46.1 Moulton's translation)

There are indications in the Ṛgveda, according to Haug, of the flight of Zarathushtra's followers pursued by the ruling military class:[110]

> Therewith unraptured, hero, slay our foemen, Th'unfriendly, *Maghavan*,[111] be they kin or strangers; Those who still aim their hostile darts to smite us, Turn them to flight, O Indra, crush and kill them.
>
> (RV VI.44.16-17 Griffith's translation)

Moulton adds in his footnote that the three existing classes of his time (*airyaman*, *xvaetu* and *verezena*) are cited in the Yasna 46.1.[112] The tripartite social organization was according to many scholars a fact in Zarathushtra's time or precisely in the Indo-Iranian

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[110]Haug, op. cit., p.291.

[111]"Maghavan" is the term by which the early disciples and followers of Zarathushtra designated themselves. Cf.Y.51.15.

[112]Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, op. cit., p.117.

period,[113] and the two higher classes (warriors and priests) were associated with one another excluding the masses:[114]

> Already in the Ṛgveda their names (the name of the higher social groups) are coupled to the exclusion of the *viśah*, the Aryan masses...The combination Indra-Agni, which was a ritual reality, was to a considerable extent determined by their being representatives of these two social groups, Agni being closely associated with the "brahmanical order", Indra with nobility. The royal person (*rājā*) who cleans the path to a *brahman* who is in need of help, will win the gods favour (RV 4.50.9). A counterpart is RV 2.12.6 where Indra is stated to further the brahmin praiser or reciter (*kiri*) who is in need of holy."

However the social division at this time was more based on the occupation and was different from the caste system developed later on.[115] But even then, those who held an advantageous position in the society were not disposed to share their prerogatives.

The status of guardian of religion gave notable prestige and moral authority to the priestly class. The reason was that in ancient times religion played a very important part in the socio-political life (Cf.p.14, footnote 51). The outcome was the gain of prestige and moral authority for the priestly class. The priest was a high dignitary under the king or

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[113]E.Beneveniste, Le Vocabulaire des Institutions Indo-Européenes, Paris, Ed.de Minuit, 1969, I p.279 ff.
U.M.Apte, "Were Castes Formulated in the Age of the Ṛgveda?" Bulletin Deccan College Research Institute 2, Poona, 1940, p.34.
Boyce, op. cit., p.38: "Clearly there were priests who served Iranian war-lords."
Gonda, Triad in the Veda, op. cit., pp.126, 135.
Matas, op. cit., p.74.

[114]Gonda, Triad in the Veda, op. cit., p.133.

[115]B.N.Luniya, Life and Culture in Ancient India, Agra, Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, 1978, pp.111-112.
Kenneth S.Macdonald, The Vedic Religion, Calcutta, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1982, p.130.

whoever was the ruler.[116] The Ṛgveda demonstrates that the spell or manthra of the priests had a "very definite military value" and therefore their escort to the battlefield was acknowledged as a powerful support.[117] Zarathushtra names priestly classes who attended the military authority of the country (Y.32.12 *Grehma*, *Karapan*; Y.44.20 *Karapan*, *Usij*). The clergy in his society was part of the double-elite distinct from the "non-elitarian mass",[118] and it strove to keep its distinction and enhance its importance by relieving the ruling military class from their administrative work, and by conducting complicated rituals. However the clergy relied on the warrior nobility for its honorarium.[119]

The warrior leader and the religious authorities in Zarathushra's land, as in the other Indo-Iranian lands, differentiated themselves from the third state which interestingly in Sanskrit is represented by the term vaiśya (from Vedic root viś, literally "the common subjects" and in Avestan by *vāstryo fšuyant*, "who is a shephard and attends livestocks".[120] *Vastryo* is the term used for herdsman in Yasna 53.4.[121] *Vaiśyas* (or viś) in the Indo-Iranian

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[116]Chhanda Chakraborty, Common Life in the Ṛgveda and Atharvaveda, Calcutta, Punthi Pustak, 1977, p.19.
Gonda, Triad in the Veda, op. cit., p.169, footnote 248: "In the ancient Indo-European communities religion and practical life, technics and rituals, were indosolubly interlaced."

[117]Griswold, op. cit., p.172. Cf. RV III.33.

[118]Gonda, Triad in the Veda, op. cit., p.170.

[119]Gonda, Triad in the Veda, op. cit., p.126.
Griswold, op. cit., pp.48-49.

[120]Gonda, Triad, op. cit., p.137.
Beneveniste, op. cit., I p.287 f.
Luniya, op. cit., p.111.

[121]Boyce, op. cit., p.31.

society were tributary to the nobility and could be "oppressed at will".[122] The Gathas indeed recount that the common people were subordinated to the rulers: "The sacrificers (*karapans*) and the princes have subdued mankind to the yoke of their Dominion" (Y.46.11 Duchesne-Guillemin's translation). Another verse which is also revealing of Zarathushtra's opposition to the social discriminatory system, is the stanza mentioned earlier on *Yima*. *Yima* is not only guilty of having instituted a ritual based on the immolation of the ox, he is also related to as the establisher of the three classes of the society.[123] *Yima* (Vedic *Yama*) was the king, the representative of the warrior class. He had refused to hand down to man the *ahuric* message, preferring to function as the ruler of the earth. Zarathushtra referred to *Yima* as an improper ruler and discredited the ruling classes as the followers of old retrogressing institutions handed down by *Yima*.[124]

Therefore Zarathushtra was, with little doubt excoriating a priestly elite and the military aristocracy which it served.[125] He had taken the side of the pasturers and cattle breeders who were deprived of their pastures, crops and cattle.[126] Haug is not altogether

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[122]Griswold, op. cit., p.51. Cf. Aitrareya Brāhmana VII.29.4.

[123]Gonda, Triad, op. cit., p.167.

[124]Zaehner, op. cit., pp.84-85.
Gnoli, op. cit., p.158. Cf.Avesta, Vendidad II.3-4, II.7.

[125]Matas, op. cit., p.1.
Boyce, op. cit., pp.37-38.
Griswold, op. cit., p.49.
Gathas, Y.46.11, 32.11.

[126]Gathas, Y.29.6: "The Creator had formed thee (the riches of the earth, the cow) for the cattle tender and the farmer."
Y.32.10: "He it is that destroys the lore, who declares that the Ox and the Sun are the worst

wrong in referring to Zarathushtra's religion as the religion of the husbandmen. After all the Yasnas 31.10 and 49.4 ascribe such theory to Zarathushtra himself:[127]

> He that is no husbandman, O Mazda, however he be has no part in the good message.
>
> (Y.31.10 Moulton's translation)

> Not husbandmen among husbandmen, those whose ill-deeds are not outweighed by their deeds, they have delivered their evildoers' consciences to the devas.
>
> (Yasna 49.4 Duchesne-Guillemin's translation)

A Religious Conflict Leading a Social Conflict

Had Zarathushtra's nation been at war against a hostile nation the belligerent attitude of the ruling class would not have been questioned in the Gathas. The Gathas would have then resembled Ṛgvedic hymns dedicated to Indra praising a warrior god and military feats. On the contrary, Zarathushtra is involved in a religious conflict, rejecting the head god, which was a god of war, and the cult of the ruling class, the cult of a military aristocracy.[128] This cult (Soma cult) was a preliminary to war and a means to assure Indra's assistance. The warfaring class who probably had not surrendered its power after the war time and had maintained its

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thing to behold with the eyes, and hath made the pious into liars, and desolates the pastures and lifts his weapon against the righteous man."

[127]Haug, op. cit., p.52. Cf. Y.31.2.
Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, op. cit., pp.84-85, 117.
Rogers, op. cit., p.25. Cf. Y.33.6, 49.4, 51.14.

[128]Boyce, op. cit., p.38.

martial laws and customs even in times of "relative peace", continuing to pillage and steal cattle.[129] To use Griswold's terms "the ruling class and the military class coincided as they do in every age".[130] The warfaring aristocracy would have established itself "as a class of landed gentry" carrying on its warfaring way of life, a phenomenon quite usual according to Boyce as "ex-soldiers have moreover been identified as agents of unrest".[131]

Zarathushtra considered that invocations to devas or gods of war were henceforth unnecessary, he believed that the religion had to change. According to him divinities who required sacrifices, costing herdsmen cattle, and whose cults were elitist, were not suitable for the society. After all the gods and cults had to respond to social needs. However these gods and cults were supported by the ruling classes. Therefore Zarathushtra's religion "bore far-reaching political consequences".[132] His words were polemical,[133] he had sided with the unprivileged or more likely with the "people who were devoted to stock-raising, pasturage

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[129]Arun Bhattacharjee, Bharatvarsha an Account of Early India with Special Emphasis on Social and Economic Aspects, New Delhi, Ashish Pub. House, 1988, p.32: "The Vedic king was primarily a military leader...He was entitled to a portion of the booty from successful cattle raids."
Edward W.Hopkins, The Social and Military Position of the Ruling Caste in Ancient India as Represented by the Sanskrit Epic, Varanasi, Bharat-Bharati, 1972, p.20.

[130]Griswold, op. cit., p.47.

[131]Boyce, op. cit., p.39.

[132]Kellens and Pirart, op. cit., pp.22, 31.
Bartholomae, op. cit., p.13.

[133]Kellens and Pirart, op. cit., p.22.

and the tilling of the land" defending them against "social groups who made livelihood by virtue of their strength and their superiority in war."[134]

Zarathushtrianism was an "historical event which bore far-reaching political consequences albeit in its essence it has been of...religious character."[135] Zarathushtra's religion like any other reforming religion was inseparable from the socio-political life in ancient times.[136] His message was universal and his religion was against strict social divisions. He did not exclude any social category (Y.46.2),[137] neither did he make any gender discrimination (Y.53.6). His religious and social aspirations were to recur centuries later in the person of the Buddha. Buddhism like Zarathushtrianism had grown out of an Aryan warfaring tradition and had struggled to reform age old beliefs and practices felt as obsolete for its extant society.[138]

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[134]Gnoli, op. cit., p.157.
Gathas, Y.48.5: "May good rulers and not bad ones, rule over us!...Through the labour of husbandry, let the ox grow fat for our nourishment" (Duchesne-Guillemin's translation).

[135]Bartholomae, op. cit., p.1.

[136]Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, Cleveland, World-Publications Co., 1963, p.XIII: "Obviously there are no purely religious phenomena; no phenomenon can be solely and exclusively religious. Because relgion is human it must for that very reason be something linguistic, something economic."
Gonda, Triad in the Veda, op. cit., p.169 footnote 248.
Varma, op. cit., p.5.

[137]Gnoli, op. cit., pp.75, 188, Gnoli says that Pettazoni (Religione pp.90-91, 94-98) is the only one to have understood fully the Zarathushtrian religion and to have put stress on his universalism.
Jafarey, op. cit., p.53.
Boyce, op. cit., p.31.

[138]Gnoli, op. cit., p.38 footnote 196, p.184.

Chapter 2: Buddhism: Another Vision of Religion and Society

The Vicissitudes of the Aryan Religion and Society in India

At least four centuries had past from the advent of Zarathushtrianism. At the sixth century B.C. Indians and Iranians had already been divided for some time. However as the Perisian Empire had established itself beyond the Indus Valley, the intense relations between the two people were maintained.[139] The Zarathushtrian reform had not really touched the Indian subcontinent and even in Iran the counter-reform to Zarathushtrianism had practically eliminated the genuine socio-religious reforms initiated by Zarathushtra. In India the Vedic religion had evolved without being struck by any brisk reform, or any successful dissident movements.

The socio-political situation differed somewhat from the earlier Indo-Iranian (Vedic) period. The Indian Aryans were not living anymore as a frontier people exposed constantly to wars.[140] The warrior class had to undergo definitive transformation. Whilst in

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[139]Jawaharlal Nehru, "India and Iran", Indo-Iranica, 1964, vol.17 no.2 p.25: "In the sixth century B.C. the Perisian Empire under Darius stretched right up to North-West India, including Sind and probably part of western Punjab."
Griswold, op. cit., p.130 footnote 2: "The spread of the people over Iran and India did not at first and in itself cause complete severance".
Varma, op. cit., p.349.

[140]Pande, op. cit., p.264.

Zarathushtra's time they dedicated their whole time to warfare, at this period the military class had to adapt to a settled life. Wars did not last and warriors continued to fight but the naissance of fixed nations and defined borders had changed the sense of war: "war became a serious business".[141] The leading warriors had established themselves as settled lords and the most prominent among them had become a chief or a head of state.[142] The age of migrations and settlement had passed and "the territorial element had attained preponderance over the tribal in the organization of the state." It was from then possible to speak of specific states with recognized sovereigns.[143]

The religion would have fundamentally changed if the entire socio-political infra-structure had altered but this was not the case. The social system continued to be hierarchical and found expression in the complex system of castes[144] hence becoming more restrictive.[145] The military class was still the ruling class, and the god Indra, far from being retired, continued to lead princes into war. The monarchs of Magadha, Kosala, Vamsa and Avanti,

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[141]E.W.Hopkins, The Religions of India, New Delhi, Munshiram Mansharlal, 1970, p.20.

[142]Kosambi, op. cit., p.88.
Hopkins, op. cit., p.20.

[143]Pande, op. cit., p.311: "India was divided into a number of monarchical and republican states."

[144]In this work the term "caste" expresses the Brahmanic concept of "varṇa" and does not refer to the notions of "jati" and "kula".

[145]Pande, op. cit., p.264.

to name only a few, relied on the assistance of the war god to help them expand their kingdom.[146]

The priests taught their heroic epics to foster the spirit of conquest. This gave them the opportunity to carry on great sacrifices for the sake of war: "the greatest fruit" of yajña sacrifices, during which all sorts of living beings were slaughtered, remained success in war. The priests benefitted directly from the sacrifices gaining prestige and wealth.[147] With the kṣatriyas (governing and fighting classes), the brahmans (priests and law enactors) constituted the upper strata of the society. The status of kṣatriyas and brahmans was fixed by the caste system where social position was founded on birth. At the period of the rise of Buddhism, the brahmans claimed supremacy over all castes.[148] According to the Brahmanic tradition, even the kings belonged to the second caste because they were of the kṣatriya element.[149] The

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[146]Anukul C.Banerjee, Buddhism in India and Abroad, Calcutta, The World Press Private Ltd, 1973, pp.4-7.
Pande, op. cit., p.313.
Marasinghe, op. cit., p.102.
Chakravarti, op. cit., p.8.

[147]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.31.
Pande, op. cit., p.273.
Kosmabi, op. cit., p.87.

[148]Griswold, op. cit., p.165.
Marasinghe, op. cit., p.4.

[149].Mukherjee, "The Early Buddhism and its Social Contents", Social Contents of Indian Religious Reform Movements, Calcutta, Institute of Historical Studies, 1978, p.5.

burden of taxation and labour rested on the lower castes of the vaiśyas and the śūdras, who composed the mercantile and the "servile" class.[150]

This same period also witnessed an upsurgence in trade,[151] an event which had a profound effect on the stratification of society. The rich merchants and landlord peasants, thanks to the new redistribution of wealth, were able to earn respect and become influential. Thus, the division of the society was no longer determined solely by caste but also by wealth. Nevertheless, the Brahmanic tradition insisted on the spiritual supremacy of the poorest brahman over the rich merchant or landlord farmer.[152]

The socio-economic changes had a direct impact on the traditions. The accession of rich merchants and prosperous farmers to the wealthy class caused the brahmans to diverisify their rituals and sacrificial practices in order to extend their services to this new clientele. The brahmans presented the rituals equally beneficial to kings and rich tradesmen. Thus, by widening the range of rituals and sacrifices, the brahmans gained more wealth and assured their ascendancy.[153]

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[150]K.T.S.Sarao, The Origin and Nature of Ancient Indian Buddhism, Delhi, Eastern Book Linkers, 1989, p.6.
Jogiraj Basu, India of the Age of the Brāhmanas, Calcutta, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1969, p.15.
Banerjee, op. cit., p.7.

[151]Banerjee, op. cit., p.8.

[152]Sarao, op. cit., pp.7-8, 10.
Varma, op. cit., pp.117, 336.

[153]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.32.
Sarao, op. cit., pp.10-11.

The Buddha did not admit to the superiority of brahmans or any other person on grounds of birth.[154] The religious practices disparaged by Early Buddhism shed doubt on the utility of the priestly institution which relied on them. According to early Buddhism, the recipients of the sacrificial rituals were devas who themselves did not know the way to eternal bliss; they were not capable of granting salvation. A posteriori the sacrifices were presented as unnecessary.[155] Buddhism recognized rituals and gods without really accepting them. Nevertheless the social success of Buddhism resided in its capacity to integrate existing beliefs and adapt them to its doctrine.[156]

Devas in Buddhism and the Case of Indra

Though Buddhism might have rejected belief in deities as it was not a religion based on theism, Buddhism adopted the devas as part of its cultural heritage. The deities did not fulfill any important function in Buddhism.[157] They were kept as a convention, embellishing the theatrical back stage of Buddhist religious debates. The gods were used as accessories

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[154]Sutta Nipāta 115-141, pp.21-23.
D.N.1.92, pp.114-115.

[155]Marasinghe, op. cit., pp.37-39, 104.

[156]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.X.

[157]D.N.3.218, p.212: The devas are defined as "beings who are similarly filled with happiness...pervaded by it: they, serenely blissful, experience only sublime happiness."
M.N.2.130, p.312: (the existence of devas and their position are questioned) "But revered sir, are there devas? Be it that these devas, revered sir, are returners to a state of being such or so, or be it that they are not returners to a state of being such or so?"

which contributed to the diminishing of their own position and enhanced the status of the Buddha and his teachings.[158] The Pali Canon featured the Buddha as a sage who was sought after by the great gods of the epoch, Śakra and Brahmā *Sahampati*.[159] The Brahmā who was considered superior to all the other Brahmās and devas was Brahmā *Sahampati*, interpreted as the "lord of the world of suffering". He was still called "Almighty", "Creator and Ruler of the World", "Father of all that are and are to be" (D.N.1.221, p.281-282), but even though Early Buddhism borrowed these titles, it regarded them as erroneous, for Brahmā was not accepted as an eternal being. By adopting Brahmā's traditional appellations, Early Buddhism avoided confusing the lay disciple who embraced the new doctrine.

In the Pali Canon, Brahmā's task was to humble himself in front of the Buddha and manifest his divine knowledge as inferior to that of the enlightened man (D.N.1.222. p.282-283).Brahmā is recounted to have asked the Buddha to preach the *Dharma* for the benefit of the world (D.N.2.38, p.31). According to this account, Brahmā regarded the Buddha in a higher spiritual position, more competent to help people than himself. Thus the most prestigious deva of the time, to which the brahmans related themselves, is depicted as

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[158]D.N.2.284, p.317: "Śakra said...I went to those I deemed to be recluses and brahmans...and actually instead of me becoming their disciple, they became mine. But, I am the disciple of the Exalted One (the Buddha)."

[159]D.N.2.229, p.266: "Then, lord, Brahmā the Eternal Youth spoke thus to Śakra, ruler of the gods: "Tis well, o ruler of the gods; we too would hear the eight truthful praises of the Exalted One."
D.N.2.279, p.314: "So Śakra, expressing his pleasure and appreciation, asked a further question of the Exalted One."

recognizing the superiority of the enlightened beings and especially the preeminence of the Buddha.[160]

Moreover Brahmā did not only lose his status as the eternal creator god;[161] the great deva was replaced by numerous unenlightened Brahmās, whose position was accessible to any ethical being (Sutta Nipāta 138-139, p.23).[162] The Brahmās had even lost credibility in front of Śakra and other gods who did not pay homage to them but instead revered the Buddha:

> And when Brahmā Sanamkumara appears before the Thirty-Three Gods, there is no god in all that assembly that salutes him, or rises up, or invites him to be seated...The Three-and-Thirty gods Tathagata they honour and the cosmic law sublime.
>
> (D.N.2.210-211, pp.244-245)

The devaluation of Brahmā also obviously compromised the position of the brahmans who had the pretension of emanating from him. By giving an authoritative explanation of their divine origin, the brahmans expected to gain the most prominent position in the society.[163] One can conjecture that brahmans had influenced the religious tradition in which Brahmā was placed above other gods in order to enhance their own credibility.

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[160]M.N.1.168, p.212; S.N.1.336.6, p.173; S.N.1.146.6, p.185.

[161]D.N.3.28, p.25: "But how do the reverand teachers declare in their traditional opinion, that the beginning of things as the work of an overlord, of Brahmā was appointed? They, so asked by me, were unable to go any further into that matter."

[162]S.N.5.232.68, p.208: "Men knew me then as Sahaka the monk. Then it was that by cultivating (Buddhist precepts) I was reborn in the Brahmā-World. Thereafter men knew me as Brahmā Sahampati."
Sutta Nipāta 138-139, p.23.

[163]B.N.Luniya, Life and Culture in India: From the Earliest Times to 1000 A.D., Agra, Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, 1978, p.112.

On the other hand, since the Buddha was born in a tribe which was composed entirely of kṣatriyas,[164] the most prominent god in their tribe was more likely to be Indra, the kṣatriya god. Indra had remained an important god because of his primacy in the Ṛgveda (D.N.2.208, p.242):

> He who as soon as born keen-thoughts, foremost, surpassed the gods, himself a god, in power; before whose vehemence the two worlds trembled. Through his great valour; he, O men, is Indra.
>
> RV II.12.1 Hillebrandt's translation.

Indra was the chief god of the Vedic Aryans and under his epithet name Śakra, he was "the chief and popular god of the Buddhists".[165] At the time of the Buddha, Śakra (Sakka in Pali) may have been the popular designation of Indra. Mrs Rhys Davids surmises that the epithet Śakra may have been chosen by the Sākya clansmen "because of its phonetic similarity to their own clan's name," allowing them to claim a divine origin for their clan. In any case, it is certain that Śakra was an epithet of Indra in the Ṛgveda and a common designation for him in the Atharvaveda.[166]

While Indra was not officially rejected by the Buddha, it is difficult to say that he was adopted in the new philosophy. When passing from the Vedic religion to the Buddhist tradition Indra was completely metamorphosized. The name "Indra" was to be substituted by

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[164]Kosambi, op. cit., p.108.

[165]Godage, op. cit., p.45.
Jātaka II,33-34, p.16: Śakra and Indra are interchangeable names.

[166]T.W.Rhys Davids, Dialogues of the Buddha, London, Luzac and Company Ltd., 1959, part II p.269.
Godage, op. cit., pp.46-48.
RV 8.2.23: "O presser, offer Soma first to Indra, Hero, Śakra..." (Griffith's translation).

"Śakra" because it was more convenient to Buddhism.[167] Although Buddhism allowed him to keep his martial garb, Indra/Śakra had to put war aside and devote himself to Buddhist lore.[168] He therefore carried his weapons and maintained a formidable appearance as an inheritance of the Vedic tradition but was forbidden to use them for violent purposes.[169] Soma, the intoxicating liquor, which prepared Indra/Śakra for war, was no longer of any interest to him. On the contrary Śakra was shown to develop an averision for drinking.[170] Soma, the beverage of immortality, had become useless as the Buddhist philosophy of impermanence had made the quest for immortality irrelevant. As well Śakra was no longer described feasting on animal sacrifices because Early Buddhism refuted animal slaughtering.[171] As a result, after his converision to Buddhism, Śakra demonstrated an averision for animal killing: "Then the gods, the forefathers, Indra,...cried out: This is injustice; because of the weapon falling on the cow (Sutta Nipāta 309, p.51)." Moreover Śakra volunteered to save animals from death.[172] Śakra, like any other deity tolerated in Buddhism had no other choice but to subscribe to the ethical norms of Buddhism and renounce sacrifice.

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[167]D.N.II.259-260, p.289-290. Rhys Davids said that the "epithet of Śakra was expressly designed to distinguish him from Indra, the Vedic god whose epithet was Destroyer of towns."

[168]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.67.

[169]Godage, op. cit., p.51.

[170]Jātaka 17.29, p.147: "By these persuasive words of Śakra and his strong arguments the king became aware of the sinfulness of drinking intoxicating liquors."

[171]Sutta Nipāta 311, p.51.

[172]Jātaka XI.10-11, p.107.

Within Buddhist tradition Śakra retained his beneficent Vedic attribution of looking after the interest of virtuous people, but "without the least requirement of prayer and offering".[173] In the Jātaka and the Dīgha Nikāya, Śakra is evoked as Indra because he ruled over the *Tāvatiṁsa* gods (Thirty-three gods), the actual thirty-three gods of the Indo-Iranians.[174] But even as a ruler, Śakra consulted the other gods when making decisions, as he was to be a model for the earthly kings.[175] Śakra was able to retain, or more exactly obtain his ruling position by having followed the Buddha's precepts, and by having realized the Buddha's greatness.[176]

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[173]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.39.

[174]Godage, op. cit., pp.45, 51.
Jātaka, 22.84, p.196.
D.N.1.216-219, p.280.
A.N.1.142.3, p.127: "Once upon a time, monks, Śakra, Lord of the Devas, was instrucing the Devas of the Thirty-and-Three."
D.N.2.267, p.302: "By Śakra, Lord of Thirty-and-Three gods..."
D.N.2.274, p.308: "The Three-and-Thirty, seated round with Indra."
M.N.1.386, p.52: Here, Śakra/Indra retained even his Vedic attribution as Breaker of the Citadel (Purindala).

[175]T.W.Rhys Davids, Dialogues of the Buddha, op. cit., part 2 p.296.

[176]S.N.1.227.11, p.293: "In the days, bhikkus, when Śakra, ruler of the gods, was a man, he undertook and carried out seven (Buddhist) rules of conduct, whereby he attained his celestial soveriegnty."
D.N.2.208, p.242: "Now lord, Śakra, ruler of the gods expressed his approval in these verses: - The Three-and-Thirty...gods, Tathagata (Buddha) they honour and the cosmic law sublime, whereas they see the gods new-risen, beautiful and bright, who erst the holy life had lived, under the Happy One."

In the Buddhist tradition, any pious man could reach Śakra's devahood.[177] The Buddha was reborn many times as Śakra.[178] In other words the position of the Buddha or any enlightened person is considered to be superior to a Śakra.[179] A Śakra is no different from a mortal: he is subject to lust, illwill, stupidity, anxiety death and rebirth.[180] Therefore the enlightened individual is placed above the gods because the former is no longer subject to birth and rebirth.[181] Thus on many occasions Śakra,[182] and Brahmā[183] are found seeking the Buddha for his knowledge. In summary, early Buddhism reversed the position of men and

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[177]A.N.1.27.1, p.26: "That a woman should become a Śakra, a Mara, a Brahmā is a thing impossible. But a man may be..."
A.N.1.35.1, p.33: "Just so few in number are those beings who, deceasing as men, are reborn among the devas."
Sutta Nipāta 656, p.117.

[178]Helmuth von Glasenapp, Buddhism a Non-Theistic Religion, New York, G.Braziller, 1970, p.26. Jātaka XI.1.

[179]Jātaka 19.31, p.163-164: "Śakra, the lord of devas respectfully (bows) to the Bodhisattva..."

[180]S.N.1.219.11, p.282: "Śakra ruler of the gods, is not purged of passion, hate, or ignorance...is given to panic, to fright..."
A.N.1.144.3, p.127: "Monks, Śakra, lord of the Devas, was not released from birth, old age and death."
D.N.1.19, p.32: "...gods through the loss of self-control fall from that state."

[181]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.84.

[182]D.N.2.283-284, p.317: "And Śakra, delights with the Exalted One's utterances, expressed his pleasures...saying I have got rid of doubt and am no longer puzzled, through having the answer of the Exalted One."
S.N.1.232.11, p.296-297.

[183]D.N.1.222, p.282: "The Great Brahmā said: I do not know where those four great elements...cease. Therefore you brother...have done wrong...in that ignoring the Exalted One."

gods. Instead of men seeking to reach the devas, the devas tried to encounter enlightened men for answers to their questions.[184]

The Buddha acted in a diplomatic way by retaining the Vedic god Indra and having him "humanized and moralized".[185] Converting the king of the gods to his religion was an indirect way of convincing the ruling class to follow his message. The purpose of the mythological dialogues, by presenting the gods on the side of reformation, was to acquire the confidence of the people.[186] Nevertheless the Buddha did not accept the current beliefs in the devas, he only recognized them as a "widely known contemporary belief."[187]

An Eloquent Protest against Sacerdotal Ritualism

The questioning of the devas as omnipotent immortal beings was a poignant way of protesting against sacerdotal ritualism. The Jātakas depict a brahman with the intention of

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[184]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.84, 85: "The enlightened person like the Buddha, has surpassed the gods..."

[185]S.N.1.222.11, pp.286-287: "The Buddhist Śakra commends forbearance and greatness, he belongs to the sphere of persuasion and mildness, of concord, amity, and harmony." Godage, op. cit., p.68.

[186]Rhys Davids, Dialogues of the Buddha, op. cit., part 1 p.298.

[187]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.113.
Glasenapp, Buddhism a Non-Theistic Religion, op. cit., p23.
An important condition for being a god, which devas in Buddhism could not meet, is immortality. That is to say, in Buddhism, devas were still called gods in spite of the fact that they did not respond to the fundamental condition of being a god.
S.N.5.474.56, p.397: "Few are those beings that deceasing as Devas, are reborn among the Devas; more numerous are these beings that deceasing as Devas, are reborn in Purgatory...in the womb of an animal...in the Realm of Ghosts..."

sacrificing a bull to Agni. However, due to unfavourable circumstances, the bull got eaten by hunters. The brahman lost his belief in Agni, because he began to think that if the god is so ineffective in protecting his own property how can he have the power to fulfill the devotees demands?[188]

Buddhist accounts ridicule sacrificial observances. The masses and the priests were fundamentally concerned with ritualism,[189] because sacrificial rites were presented as the sole instruments of salvation. These sacrifices were believed to hold the power to reach the gods provided the proper formulas (*mantras*) were pronounced.[190] Sacrifices were theurgical practices through which the priests claimed to have control over the devas.[191] By dint of the sacrifices, the devotee expected the deva to reward him "with success in war, progeny, increase in cattle and long life on a quid pro quo basis",[192] and also assure the sacrificer of a celestial after-life.[193] Deliverance from death was believed to be inherent within the *Agnihotra*

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[188]Glasenapp, Buddhism a Non-Theistic Religion, op. cit., p.22. (Cf. Jātakas).

[189]Varma, op. cit., p.54.

[190]S.B.1.5.2.19, p.143: "...for when the officiating priests thus practice sacrifice with a perfect mutual understanding between them, there it will indeed rain."

[191]Glasenapp, op. cit., p.60.
Varma, op. cit., pp.55, 71, 213.

[192]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.38.
Jātaka 10.9-13, pp.96-97: "The deities being satisfied by duly and faultlessly performed sacrifices honour the creatures in return by sending rain."
S.B.1.9.1.14, p.252: "What then was more abundant offering...He (the devotee) may however, say, he prays for future worship of the gods, for thereby (he ensures) long life, offspring, cattle."

[193]S.B.1.8.3.20, p.244: "Thus the Adhvaryu and the Agnidhra (the performers of the sacrifice) lead the sacrificer to the world of the gods."

offering.[194] The rituals had been valorised in the Vedic tradition due to the belief that the priests were intermediaries between mortals and the powerful eternal gods. But Buddhism declared the gods to be impermanent and impotent as far as salvation and redemption were concerned. By virtue of merits gained through observance of Buddhist precepts, any human being was thought to be in a position of attaining devahood. Therefore there was more to gain by following the Buddhist precepts than sacrificing to the devas and simply obtaining impermanent goods from them. Moreover these sacrificial rituals induced people to hold drunken orgies and kill animals, which infringed Buddhist ethics.[195] Early Buddhism strived to dissuade people from holding sacrifices. It gave a dreadful image of sacrificial practices, and represented them as impure:[196]

> The king or a very rich brahman who speak thus - Let so many bulls be slain for the sacrifice, let so many steers...heifers...goats...let so many rams be slain for the sacrifice...let so many trees be felled for the sacrificial posts...Those who are called his slaves or messengers or workpeople, they, scared of the stick, scared of danger, with tearful faces and crying, set about their preparation. This, monks, is called the person who is both a self-tormentor...and a tormentor of others.
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> (M.N.1.344, p.8-9)

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[194]S.B.2.2.4.7, p.324: "And Prajāpati, having performed (Agnihotra) offering, reproduced himself, and saved himself from Agni, Death, as he was about to devore him."
S.B.2.3.3.10, p.344: "So are all his works of sacrifice freed by this (Agnihotra) from that Death."

[195]Joghendra Nath Bhattacharya, Hindu Castes and Sects, Calcutta, Editions Indian, 1968, p.431.
D.N.1.146, p.182: "When a man...takes upon himself the precepts...abstinence from strong, intoxicating, maddening drinks."

[196]Sutta Nipāta 116, p.21: "Whosoever in this world harms living beings, whether once or twice born, and who there is no compassion for living beings, let one know him as an outcast."

The Sutta Nipāta maintains that whosoever hunted or killed living creatures could not claim sanctity (Sutta Nipāta 629, p.114), as no killing could be considered ethical.[197] On the contrary Early Buddhism highlighted the slaughtering of the cow as the cause of the principal miseries of the world. Out of greed for wealth the brahmans were said to have turned away from the Dharma and bestowed violence on cows. According to Buddhists, they induced kings to offer cattle for sacrifice only out of self-interest.[198] The Brahmanic greed for wealth is related to have changed the simple religious ceremony into a prodigal and dissipative business.[199]

Sacrificial rituals were also a means of discrimination. Not all castes were admitted to Homa and Soma rituals. During the Soma sacrifice only the brahmans were allowed to drink of the beverage.[200] The sacrificial ritualism was restricted not only by caste but also by wealth, as only rich people could meet the expenses.[201]

Although Buddhism rejected the Brahmanic system of rituals, it recognised that rituals served a social purpose, and thus tolerated what it considered harmless rites. Dīgha Nikāya

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[197]M.N.1.343, p.8: "In this case, monks, some person is a cattle-butcher, or a pig-killer, fowler, deer-stalker, hunter, fisherman, thief, executioner, jailor, or (one of) those others who follow a bloody calling. This is the person, monks, who is called a tormentor of others, intent on the practice of tormenting others."
M.N.3.203, p.249-250.

[198]Sutta Nipāta 301-311, p.50-51.

[199]Varma, op. cit., pp.75-76, 333, 335.
D.N.1.127, p.173: We are told that sacrifices could have been consisted of "...a hundred bulls and a hundred steers and a hundred heifers and a hundred goats and a hundred rams."

[200]Marasinghe, op. cit., pp.105, 108, 250.

[201]Varma, op. cit., p.333.

states that animal sacrifices could be replaced by uncruel offerings, such as that of ghee, butter, honey or milk.[202] However Buddhism ultimately held these customs to be void of moral value.

The Buddha challenged the idea that any external observance had the power to bring liberation, especially if it involved animal slaughtering or involved a heavy fee for the brahmans.[203] Early Buddhism denied the efficacy of these sacrifices and rituals and recommended meditation and giving of alms to the needy instead.[204] After all, the Buddhist standards seemed more economic and were more likely to have a resonance among people.[205]

A "Religion" Responding to its Society

The extensive changes in the political and economic situation in India had a great impact on the intellectual thoughts evolving in the country at the time of the appearance of

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[202]D.N.1.141, p.180: At that sacrifice neither were any oxen slain, neither goats, nor fowls...With ghee, and oil, and butter, and milk, and honey, and sugar only was that sacrifice accomplished."

[203]D.N.1.12, p.25 : "Whereas some brahmans earn their living by wrong means...offering sacrifices."

[204]D.N.1.143-144, p.181-182: "Is there, O Gotama, any other sacrifice less difficult...with more fruit...Yes there is...the perpetual gifts kept in the family where they are given specifically to virtuous recluses."
D.N.1.147, p.153: "(there is a sacrifice with greater fruit) with his heart thus serene, made pure...fiem and imperturbable, he applies and bends down his mind to that insight that comes from knowledge."

[205]Marasinghe, op. cit., pp.36-37.
Varma, op. cit., p.336.

the Buddha. At that period India was divided into a number of growing monarchies and republics, which were all in conflict with one another. These conflicts brought about a decline of the republics and the rise of absolute monarchies.[206] The disintegration of the tribal republic system and the advent of urbanization had opened new horizons for trade.[207] The expansion of trade gave another spirit to the society. Another fortunate class had come to join the privileged brahmans and kṣatriyas. These were the wealthy traders who, thanks to their wealth, were able to act as bankers and financiers and gain respect from kings.[208] Some land-owning peasants had also found the opportunity to enrich themselves and join the privileged classes. Towns had become markets for their agricultural products. These traders and land-owners, regardless of caste, commanded respect due to their wealth. They were referred to as **grihapati**.[209] However, because of their caste at birth, the grihapatis were considered to be

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[206]Pande, op. cit., pp.311-312.

[207]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.28.
Chakravarti, op. cit., p.20: "The expansion of agriculture...was a major factor in the new phenomenon of urbanization."
S.N.5.369.55, p.320: "Lord, this town of Kapilavattha is rich prosperous, populous, crowded with men, a dense mass of folk."
M.N.3.59, p.103: Market towns are distinguished from common towns.

[208]D.N.2.176, p.207: "Long ago, the Great King of Glory, to test that wonderful grihapati-treasurer said...I have need, O Grihapati, of yellow gold. There the wonderful grihapati reached down to the water with both his hands, and drew up a jar full of yellow gold."

[209]Kosambi, op. cit., p.100-101.
D.N.1.61, p.77: "I can, O King, and to that end I would fain put a question...the case now put being that of a free man who cultivates his land, a grihapati who pays taxes and thus increases the king's wealth."
D.N.2.86, p.91: "Fivefold, O grihapatis, is the gain of the well-doer through his practice of rectitude. In the first place the well-doer, strong in rectitude, acquires great wealth through his industry."
M.N.1.360, p.26: The grihapati says: "As to this, good Gotama, I handed over to my sons

inferior to brahmans and kṣatriyas.[210] As such it was in their interest that privileges related to birth be dismissed. Opposing privileges based on caste, Buddhism in all likelihood appealed to the thriving classes of traders and agricultural landowners.

The Buddha's questioning of the existing caste system was particularly aimed at the brahmans and kṣatriyas.[211] The system was organized to the advantage of the two upper castes (brahmans and kṣatriyas), leaving the burden of labour and taxation on the vaiśyas (farmers) and the śūdras (serfs).[212] Those of the vaiśyas and the śūdras who eventually made fortune had a position in the Brahmanical system which they regarded incompatible with their financial situation. Thus new classes of rich farmer-landlords and traders were dissatisfied with this system because their cause was ignored.[213]

According to the Buddhist sources the brahmans profited the most from the system, and abused their authority over members of other castes.[214] The brahmans pretended to be

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as their inheritance all that I had of wealth or gain or silver or gold."

[210]Sarao, op. cit., p.10.

[211]D.N.1.92, p.114-115.

[212]Hopkins, op. cit., p.20.
Varma, op. cit., p.336. Footnote 1, Brihadaranyaka Upanisad 1,4,11.
Sarao, op. cit., p.6.

[213]S.K.Desai, "Jainism and its Social Contents", Social Contents of Indian Religious Reform Movements, Calcutta, Institute of Historical Studies, 1978, pp.21-22.

[214]D.N.1.91, p.114: Ambattha, the brahman viewed that "the ksatriyas the vaiśyas and the śūdras (were) verily but attendants on the brahmans."
Aitareya Brāhmana 2.10.1: "...the kṣatriya subserve brahman and the vaiśya subserve kṣatriya."
D.N.3.83, p.79: "The wise do not admit those claims which the brahmnas put forward."

gods themselves[215] and to be offsprings and legitimate heirs of the great god Brahmā.[216] They had the pretension of being the mediators between earth and heaven[217] and having the power of reaching gods through complicated rituals.[218] Recognized as custodians of religion and experts in sacrifices, they benefited from great social esteem and prestige.[219] Even the kings honoured them and believed that the brahmans possessed inherent powers of bringing success and prosperity. Moreover the king's chief minister (*Purohita*), "who gave counsel in matters both spiritual and temporal" was a brahman.[220] This explains the reasons for which the monarchs bestowed numerous gifts upon the priests and carried out the priestly directives:[221]

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[215]S.B.4.3.4.4: "There are two kinds of gods...brahmans...are gods among men."

[216]M.N.2.84, p.273: "...brahmans speak thus: Only brahmans form the best caste, all other castes are low; brahmans are own sons of Brahmā, born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, formed by Brahmā, heirs to Brahmā."

[217]Monier-Williams, Religious Thought and Life in India, New Delhi, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1974, p.7.

[218]Pande, op. cit., p.273.

[219]Varma, op. cit., pp.117, 336.
Sarao, op. cit., p.10.
S.B.11.5.7.1: "People should protect the brahmans by performing four duties, by showing him respest and liberality acknowledging his invincibility and by granting him security against capital punishment." S.B.13.1.5.4: The king could not oppress the brahman because of divine wrath.

[220]Basu, op. cit., p.22 Cf.A.B.7.34.8: "The Purohita is one-half of the ksatriya soul."

[221]D.N.1.127, p.173: "Now at that time the Brahman Kutadanta was dwelling at Khanumata, a place teeming with life, with much grassland and woodland and wake and corn, on a royal domain presented him by Seniya Bimbisara, the king of Magadha, as a royal gift, with power over it as if he were the king."
D.N.1.187, p.108, D.N.1.127, p.173.
Varma, op. cit., p.335 Cf.Brihadaranyaka 3.7.1: King Janaka is recounted to have held a sacrificial congregation at his court and to have had his great wealth consumed for sacrificial purpose.

> And then the king, the lord of chariots, instructed by the brahmans, brought about assamedha, purusamedha, sammapasa, and vakapeyya without any hinderance, and having offered these sacrifices he gave the brahmans wealth: cows, beds, garments, and adorned women...carpets in variegated colours, beautiful palaces...And then the king...instructed by the brahmans, caused many hundred thousand cows to be slain in offering.
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> Sutta Nipāta 302-307, pp.50-51

While demonstrating the knowledge of the sacrificial brahmans as not being of benefit to the prosperity of the king and the kingdom,[222] the Dīgha Nikāya counsels the potentate on efficacious ways to acquire prosperity for himself and his realm. The Buddha advised the monarch on his political decisions: he proposed to the king that, instead of holding sacrifices, one should make concrete gestures and have food and seed distributed to the farmers and capital given to the trading people (D.N.1.135, p.176). According to Buddhism, these measures would be more effective and generate a steady social order. For, when all have been given the means of subsistence, theft and violation of property will cease.[223] The Buddha suggested to the king not to increase taxes and not to show greed in accumulating wealth because "wealth does not follow him who is dying...nor property, or kingdom (M.N.2.73, p.265)."[224] The Buddha warned the king that the lust for conquest ends by ruining the

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Basu, op. cit., p.180.

[222]D.N.1.9, pp.19-20: "Whereas some brahmans...earn their living by wrong means...such as soothsaying that the home chiefs will gain the victory, and the foreign chiefs suffer defeat."

[223]D.N.3.65, pp.65-66: "Then the king...bestowed no wealth. And because this was no done, poverty became widespread. When poverty was thus become rife, a certain man took that which others had not given him."
D.N.2.180, p.211.

[224]D.N.1.142, p.180: "The kṣatriya vassals, and the ministers and officials, and the brahmans of position, and grihapatis of substance went to king Wide-realm, taking with them much wealth...(the king replied to them) sufficient wealth have I, my friends, laid up, the produce

country.[225] Wars have a negative impact on economy, they are noxious to trade and agriculture. Battles disturb trade exchanges and exposed agricultural fields to plunder, and, as a result, the people have to endure deprivations and famine. Thus, Buddhism supported a universal monarchy which would attend to the peace in all societies.[226]

These assertions invited the king to realize the socio-economic needs and realities of the time. The Buddha advised the ruler to preserve the natural resources of his country by avoiding sacrifices as they not only consume animals but exhaust the forests as well.[227] The Dīgha Nikāya requested that the sovereign consult the influential people of his country before

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of taxation that is just."
Jātaka 10.35, p.103: "The prince who strives after material prosperity, ought to act in accordance with precepts of religion, thinking a religious conduct of his subjects to be the source of prosperity."
D.N.2.193, p.226: "There, O King, are those four and eighty thousand divans of gold...Cast away desire for them, long not after life."

[225]M.N.2.72, p.265: Buddha discouraged conquests.
Jātaka 23.66-69, p.216-217: "(the King) if he fail to protect the peasants, his tax-payers, both the husbandmen and the cattle breeders...a king gets into difficulties concerning such a wealth as consists in fruits of the earth. If he fail to protect traders and townsmen...he raises difficulty for himslef with respect to his treasury."
D.N.3.62, pp.63-63.

[226]Jātaka 10, p.94: "Long ago was a king, his sovereignty being universally acknowledged."
D.N.3.59, p.60: "Long, long ago, there was a sovran overlord named strongtyre, a righteous king, ruling in righteousness, lord of the four quarters of the earth."
Oldenberg, op. cit., p.65.
Varma, op. cit., p.101.

[227]D.N.1.141, p.180: "Brahman, at that sacrifice neither were any oxen slain, neither goats, nor fowls, nor fatted pigs, nor were any kinds of living creatures put to death. No trees were cut down to be used as posts..."

performing a large sacrifice. The king was told to listen to his subjects and act with more generosity towards them.[228]

The stories in the Pali Canon heavily criticized tyrannical and despotic kings.[229] Kings and robbers were sometimes identified with each other and considered as accomplices in violating the wealth of people.[230] The rājās were depicted as applying the law in an arbitrary manner. Buddhism admonished kings and reminded them that their function was to protect people's property, punish thieves and fight against disorder.[231] The king, because of his power, had a pivotal role in improving the society and establishing a moral order.[232] Buddhism regarded **Dharma** (as the norm which rules moral life) as an integral part of

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[228]Jātaka 10.14, p.98: "The king convoked an assembly of the townsmen and the landsmen."
D.N.1.139-140, p.179: "For the consent of the four classes has been obtained..."
D.N.1.228, p.292: "King Pasenadi of Kosala being in power over Kasi and Kosala, should therefore himself enjoy all the revenue and produce thereof, bestowing nothing on anyone else, would be making danger for those living in dependance upon the king."
D.N.2.180, p.211: "The Ananda, the Great King of Glory, established a perpetual grant by the banks of those Lotus ponds, to wit, food for the hungry...gold for the poor."

[229]Chakravarti, op. cit., p.167.

[230]A.N.1.152.3, p.137: "A robber chief relies on rājāhs or rājāh's great ministers. He thinks: "If anyone accuses me, these rājāhs or rājāh's great ministers will give an explanation in my defence. And they do so."
A.N.3.259.5, p.190: "Riches are in danger of fire, in danger of floods, in danger of rājāhs, in danger of robbers, in danger of unloved heirs."

[231]A.N.1.69.11, p.64: "But monks, when rulers are strong, robbers are weak. At such a time it is easy for rulers to go out and about or to superwise the border townships. At such a time it is easy for grihapatis to go out and about and inspect work done outside."
Jātaka 10.17, p.99: "The king, a granter of security as he is, warrants safety to every one who constantly cultivates honesty and good conduct, in short to the virtuous."
D.N.3.59, p.60: "...a righteous king, protector of his people."

[232]D.N.2.202, p.238: "Then too there was Seniya Bimbisara (king of Magadha)...he too had entire faith in the Buddha, the Law, and the Order, and fulfilled the moral precepts."

kingship.[233] By preaching at the king, Buddhism aspired to involve the sovereign in a process of socio-political reform.

The reform which Buddhism sought was to generate a more just and "egalitarian" social system.[234] Many of the Buddha's statements in relation to society encouraged, to a certain degree, the emancipation of the lower castes. The Buddha asserted that he would never diminish himself to attend on any person, not even the king, purely on the grounds that the person was born in a superior caste.[235] The Buddha opined that receiving service should not depend on one's position in a status hierarchy "but on one's ability to pay for service."[236] He held that any person from any caste, including śūdras, who can afford a servant could have one.[237] Buddhism, intentionally or unintentionally, was responding to the aspirations of the new wealthy classes of traders and land cultivators who descended in majority from the vaiśya class.[238] Contrary to Brahmanism which supported only exclusive privileges for Brahmans, Buddhism fostered the emancipation of lower classes of vaiśyas and śūdras before

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[233]A.N.1.109.3, p.94: "He it is that rājāh...that rolls the wheel of sovereignty according to Dharma."
A.N.3.148.5, p.115: "...the rājāh, the wheel roller, the Dharma man."

[234]Varma, op. cit., pp.370-371.

[235]D.N.1.8, p.15: "..to wit on kings, ministers of state, kṣatriyas, brahmans...Gotama, the recluse abstains from such servile duties."

[236]Chakravarti, op. cit., p.99.

[237]M.N.2.84-85, p.274: "If a śūdra (or a vaiśya or a kṣatriya or a brahman) were to thrive in wealth or corn or gold or silver, he could have as his obedient servant another worker and he could have a kṣatriya and he could have a brahman and he could have a vaiśya as his obedient servant."

[238]Basu, op. cit., p.11: "The vaiśyas looked after trade and agriculture."

the law. According to Brahmanic laws, the Brahmans were to enjoy permissive laws paying no taxes and were exempted from severe punishments, reserved in this tradition for the lower castes.[239] On the other hand, the Buddha exhorted that people from all castes be treated equally by the law and be punished alike for their crimes. Thereby he insisted on the equality of the four castes and brought the brahmans and the śūdras to an equal footing.[240]

Moreover, Buddhism accused the brahmans of taking advantage of their contemporary social and religious system to enrich themselves and of using unethical means to perform their religious duties.[241] The brahmans were viewed as having merged with materialistic society,[242] elaborating more their sacrificial rituals, making them more prodigal and more costly than ever. According to the Buddhist literature, the brahmans were more

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[239]A.B.7.35.3: "...receipt of gifts, drinking of soma, moving at will, smartness and optional submission to the king" are the mark of a brahman. The vaiśya is one "who pays tax to another, is lived on by another, and can be oppressed or enslaved at will". The śūdra is "the servant of another, to be evicted at will and to be slain at will".
S.B.11.5.7.1: "People should protect the brahmans by performing four duties, by (showing him) respect and liberality, acknowledging his invincibility and by granting him security against capital punishment."

[240]M.N.2.88, p.276-277: "If a brahman (or a kṣatriya or a vaiśya or a śūdra) were to break into a house, or carry off a loot, or commit a robbery, or make an ambush...what would you to him (O King). -(The king replies) We should kill him or ruin him or banish him, or deal with him as we liked. He is reckoned simply as a thief (not as a brahman or a kṣatriya...). - Sir this being so, are these four castes exaclty the same or not? - (The king answers) Indeed these four castes are exactly the same."

[241]Varma, op. cit., p.334.

[242]D.N.1.234, p.313: "Now what think you, Vaseitha, are the brahmans versed in the Vedas in the possession of wives and wealth or are they not?-They are Gotama."

interested in their fees and daksinās than anything else.[243] The Jātakas depict them as having an utterly mundane existence, leading luxurious lives, being interested in women, and as yielding to festivities and orgies (Jātakas, 32.1-2, p.315). Furthermore, their sacrificial rituals had to meet their expenses, and therefore they were made more elaborate.

The brahmans were also able to inculcate their vision of society because they occupied key positions in the administrative, educational and religious functions of the country.[244] The Brahmanical system stratified the society in a hierarchical or linear order placing brahmans first followed by kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras.[245] Buddhism reacted to the brahmanical stratification of the society by changing the order as to overrule the brahmans' claim to social preeminence: "in the relationship of high and low" the kṣatriyas were placed above the brahmans.[246] Kṣatriyas were presented as essential for preserving the social order, but the

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[243]D.N.2.248, p.278: "Leaving the world means little power and little gain; to be a brahman brings great power and great gain."
A.N.3.362.6, p.258: "And a brahman's, Gotama, what is his aim..? - Wealth id his aim, wisdom is his quest, mantras are his resolve, sacrifices his want, Brahmā-World his ideal. - And a recluses', Master Gotama..? - Patience and forbearance are his aim, wisdom is his quest, virtue is his resolve, nothing is his want, Nirvana his ideal."

[244]D.N.1.138, p.178: "The brahman chaplain (of the king)...was a student repeater who knew the mystic verses by heart, master of the Three Vedas, with the indices, the ritual, the phonology, and the exegesis...and the legends, learned in the idioms and the grammar, versed in Nature-lore and in the
thirty marks on the body of a great man."
Sarao, op. cit., p.10.

[245]Chakravarti, op. cit., pp.29, 98.

[246]Chakravarti, op. cit., p.101.
D.N.1.98, p.120: "Then Ambattha, whether one compares women with women, or men with men, the kṣatriya are higher and the brahmans inferior."

brahmans' role were viewed useless.[247] According to Buddhism, brahmans were to live on the margin of the society. Likewise, Early Buddhism reevaluated the term "brahman" defining it as a person of spiritual merit regardless of its birth.[248] Only the brahman, who was understood as pious, was still worthy of respect in Buddhism (Sutta Nipāta 297-311, p.50-51). As such, Buddhism's stratification of the society was different. It did not display "a complex system of ranking" like Brahmanism;[249] Buddhism recognized the significance of those who played a part in economy and claimed for them an equal voice in the society.[250] The Buddhist texts reminded the king that his wealth derived from this group of the society:[251]

> (The king) if he fail to protect the peasants, his tax-payers, both the husbandmen and the cattle breeders...a king gets into difficulty concerning such a wealth as consists in fruits of the earth. If he fail to protect traders and townsmen...he raises difficulty for himself with respect to his treasury.
> (Jātaka 23.66-69, p.216-217)

Therefore wealthy merchants and landlord farmers (designated as grihapatis) were recognized by Buddhism to be as important as kṣatriyas and brahmans.[252] As opposed to the Brahmanical division of the society, which was only founded on the basis of birth, Buddhism

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[247]Chakravarti, op. cit. p.99 Cf. DN III p.72.

[248]Chakravarti, op. cit., p 45, p.99 Cf.D.N.3, p.73.

[249]Chakravarti, op. cit., p.113.

[250]Jātaka 4, p.25: "Head of a guild, he (the grihapati) had acquired a large estate. His fairness and integrity in his commercial transactions procured him the highest esteem among people."

[251]D.N.1.61, p.77: "The case now put being that of a free man who cultivates his land, a grihapati who pays taxes and increases the kings wealth."

[252]D.N.1.142, p.180: "At the great sacrifice offered by the king the three classes were invited, the ksatriyas established a continual largesse to the east of the king's sacrificial pit...the brahmans to the west thereof, the grihapatis to the north thereof..."

responded by creating a social division which did not rely on caste and birth, but on moral conduct and achievements in society.[253]

A Religion Conciliated with Social Changes

The injustices emanating from the caste system was a major preoccupation of Early Buddhism. Buddhism censured the instigators of the system and ridiculed those who adhered to it.[254] Buddhism accepted only "a social and historical origin of the castes".[255]

The Buddha stated that the divine sanctification of the caste system by birth was a threat to the evolution of the society. As the social order was "divinely ordained", any amendment to it was a challenge to Brahmā. In this case, the outcaste and his/her descendants were doomed to remain outcastes. Moreover the same tradition which validated the caste

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[253]S.N.1.99.3, p.124: "But what would be your opinion, sire, if the youth in question, to whichever social class he belonged, were trained, skilled, expert, practised, drilled, bold, of steady nerve, undismayed, incapable of running away? Would such a man ve any good to you?-He would be useful to me."
A.N.1.161.3, p.145: "So among men, wherever he be born, noble or brahman, merchant, serf or casteless...He who is tamed,
devout, just, virtuous, to deva-world they go. Or here born of good family, in course of time the wise Nirvana will attain."
A.N.1.116.3, p.100: "The shopkeeper becomes known to grihapatis or to wealthy, very rich and opulent men..."
Sutta Nipāta 141, p.23.

[254]M.N.1.429, p.99: "...it is as if a man were pierced by an arrow that was thickly smeared with poison and his friends and relations,...were to procure a physicain and surgeon. He might speak thus: - I will not draw out this arrow until I know of the man who pierced me whether he is a kṣatriya or brahman of vaiśya or śūdra."

[255]Varma, op. cit., p.439.
The Buddha did not accept "any divine sanction for social stratification."

system represented the king as the manifestation of a divine being on earth. Refuting the monarchy was once again questioning the gods. However the eminence of the monarch and the sanctity of the caste system depended on the legitimacy of the gods. Once the devas were discredited, this Brahmanical view of the society was not valid anymore. Buddha declared man independent of gods,[256] and therefore no agency between men and god was necessary. As a result, sacrificial rituals became meaningless, as sacrifices were meant to reach gods. In these circumstances the Brahmanic tradition was questioned as Brahmanism relied on sacrifices. Buddhism denounced sacrificial rituals as a Brahmanic astuteness for gaining wealth.[257] Thus the Buddhist negation of the contemporary theology and ritualism signified a challenge to the social and economic position of the Brahmanic caste.

The brahmans used their theology to downgrade the other castes who actually supported the economy. They used the rituals to humiliate the lower castes.[258] In contrast, Buddhism gave the lower classes and underprivileged classes an opportunity to participate in religious life.[259] Kṣatriyas and brahmans as well as those who participated actively in the

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[256]Glasenapp, Buddhism a Non-Theistic Religion, op. cit., p.30-31.

[257]Chakravarti, op. cit., pp.37, 42, 43.
Luniya, op. cit., p.157.

[258]Kosambi, op. cit., p.87.
Luniya, op. cit., pp.113, 137.

[259]D.C.Ahir, Heritage of Buddhism, Delhi, B.R.Publishing Corporation, 1989, p.117 Cf. A.N. p.101: "Just...as the great rivers...when they have fallen into the great ocean...just so...do these four castes...kṣatriyas, brahmans, vaiśyas and śūdras...when they begin to follow the doctrine and discipline as propounded by the (Buddha), they renounce different names of castes and rank, and become members of one and the same society."

economy (grihapatis) were each recognized as an important pillar of the society.[260] Also, the sphere of the king and that of religion was separated in Buddhism. The association between the rulers and the ecclesiastics, which had alienated the working classes in the past, was thus prevented.[261]

In conclusion, the Brahmanic view was apparently not able to respond to the social reality of the time.[262] Economic growth, such as the expansion of agriculture and the development of trade, brought about changes that prepared the way for social reform. The Buddha may not have deliberately embarked upon a process of social reform but he could not have avoided it,[263] as religion is an integral part of the society.[264] The Buddha's movement spread in India because it appealed to groups with increasing economic power.[265]

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[260]Jātaka 4, p.25: "Commercial transactions procured (the person) the highest esteem among people."

[261]Chakravarti, op. cit., pp.67, 99, 105, 170.

[262]Ibid., p.120.

[263]Kosambi, op. cit., p.106.

[264]Sen, op. cit., p.VII.

[265]Namely the new emerging groups of landlord farmers and tradesmen.
A.N.1.25.1, p.22-23: "Monks, chief among my disciples, lay-followers, of those who first took refuge (in my teaching), are the merchants Tapassu and Bhalluka...the grihapati Anathapindika,...Ugga the grihapati of Vesali..."

Chapter 3: "Vanguardist" Social Movements among Indo-Iranians

In the previous chapters Buddhism and Zarathushtrianism were discussed as religious movements with serious social implications. It was demonstrated that their founders were well-disposed toward the people who produced the wealth of their societies and distressed by the unproductive classes who had imposed their authority on the society through devious means. This point will once again guide the arguments of this chapter within the framework of a comparative study between Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism. The three themes discussed separately in each chapter will be confronted in this section in order to evince conclusively the affinities between the two Aryan religions.

The Common Ground between Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism: A Link from Immemorial Time

The first millennium after the advent of Christ witnessed the decline of two revolutionary Indo-Iranian religions in the Aryan lands. Striking as it may sound, Zarathushtrianism's and Buddhism's epilogue was conceived in the same epoch. Between the fourth and the seventh centuries A.D. a revised form of the traditional Aryan religion (commonly called Hinduism) expanded in India to the detriment of Buddhism, while the seventh century brought Islam into the heart of Zarathushtrian Iran. Both Zarathushtrianism

and Buddhism succumbed to "Islamic aggression" respectively in the Xth and XIth century A.D., leaving both creeds in their native lands the religion of few.[266] Had the *devas* wrought their revenge on those who had repudiated them?

Both Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism had seceded from the deva-worshipping tradition and had promoted their lore regardless of the devas. Nevertheless, the founders of both these traditions are acknowledged as reformers probably because they did not seek to destroy the skeletal structure of their ancestral religious system. They are rather celebrated for having instituted ecumenical and eclectic religion founded on moral law (*Arta* or *Dharma*), and opposed to exclusive religions based, in their view, on no other law than the caprice of the ruling class.[267]

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[266]T.W. Rhys Davids, Buddhist India, Calcutta, Susil Gupta, 1957, p.145.
H.G. Rawlinson, India a Short Cultural History, London, The Cresset Press, 1952, pp.180-211.
Boyce, op. cit., pp.151, 155.
Banerjee, op. cit., p.175-176.

[267]A.L.Basham, The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faith, First Ed., Beacon Press, 1967, p.225.
Varma, op. cit., p.11 Cf.T.W.Rhys Davids, Buddhism: "Gautama was born and brought up, lived and died a Hindu...a great deal of his morality could be matched from the earlier or later Hindu books.", pp.349,357 footnote, Monier Williams believed that the Buddha remained in a system of faith and practice of his Aryan ancestors.
Reza Hamzeh'ee, "Structure and Organization Analogies Between Mazdeism and Sufism in the Kurdish Religions", Recurrent Patterns in Iranian Religions from Mazdeism to Sufism, Paris, Association pour l'Avancement des Etudes Iraniennes, 1992,
p.35: Jatindra Chaterji "believes to have found traces of Zarathushtra and his reform in Ṛgveda."
Bartholomae, op. cit., p.3.
Nigosian, op. cit., p.18.
Rogers, op.cit., p.24.
Du Breuil, op. cit., p.107.
Boyce, op. cit., p.28.

For Spitama Zarathushtra and Shakyamuni Buddha, the ancestral Aryan religion, with all its pantheon of divinities and ritualistic cult had been manipulated to serve the ends of the priestly class associated with the aristocracy. The social reform observed in Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism began with a redefinition of religion, and the questioning of the position of the hieratical class.[268]

In many ways Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism had the same approach to the "elitist Aryan religion". This was a great deal due to the common cultural heritage shared by their two founders. For centuries after the disperision of the Indo-European nations, the Indo-Iranians, designated otherwise as Aryans, formed a single demographic entity, sharing the same language, culture and religious traditions.[269] Zarathushtra and the Buddha were both from the Aryan stock of nations, considering that the Sākyan clan from which the Buddha descended claimed Aryan origin. Thus their way of thinking was moulded by what may be called an "Aryan spirit".[270] For example, Zarathushtra and the Buddha meditated on a series of identical principles. Zarathushtra's device of **humata-hūkhta-huvaršta** (good thought-good word-good deed), appearing in Buddhism in the Sacred Eight-Fold Path, was an allegory of the Vedic concept **sumati-sūkta-sukṛta**.[271]

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[268]Gathas, Y.48.10.
Sutta Nipāta 140-141, p.23.

[269]Gorekar, op. cit., p.3.

[270]Haug, op. cit., p.299 Cf. Yasht 9.14.
Kosambi, op. cit., p.108: Interestingly the name of the Buddha's clan, Sakka, has been recognized on inscriptions of late sixth century Iran.

[271]G.K.Nariman, "Buddhist Parallels to Humata-Hūkhta-Huvarshta", Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume, Bombay, Fort Printing Press, 1918, pp.311-316. Cf.Sutta Nipāta

The Zarathushtrian idea of **Arta** (aša), expressed as **Dharma** in Buddhism, is also a universal Indo-Iranian concept referred to as ṛta in the Ṛgveda. These terms which are synonymous, represented the concept of Order or Law which ruled both the physical and the moral world (moral world order is expressed in Buddhism in the term Karma).[272] In the Ṛgveda, ṛta is said to express the all embracing power which ruled over the gods (RV V.63.7 Griffith's translation).[273] In the Gathas, Ahura Mazda is described as ruling the world in accordance with **Arta** (aša).[274] In Early Buddhism, this principle of Order carried in itself the functions attributed usually to gods.[275] Certainly the spirit in which Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism preached these concepts was different from the Vedic context in which they arose; nevertheless, as observed, the "ingredients" were already existing and as a matter of fact, served to keep the bond between the Indo-Iranian religions.

Sammaparibbajamyasutta 7; Chulavagga 11.
S.N.5.2.50, p.3: "...the Aryan Eight-fold Path: right view, right aim, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration."
Gathas, Y.33,14: "Zarathushtra brings...the choiceness of good thought, action and speech." (Moulton's translation).

[272]Glasenapp, Buddhism a Non-Theistic Religion, op. cit., p.59.

[273]Griswold, op. cit., pp. 24, 107, 132-136.

[274]Gathas, Y.34.4: "O, Ahura that is mighty through Asha."; Y.34.10: Creator, comrade of Asha, wise that he is Ahura." (Moulton's translation).

[275]A.N.3.146.5, p.113: "...the (Buddha) rolls on by Dharma, the unsurpassed Dharma wheel; and that wheel may not be rolled back by recluse, godly man, deva, Mara, Brahmā, or by any in the world."
Glasenapp, Buddhism a Non-Theistic Religion, op. cit., p.52.

Devas: Evil Gods or Dispensable Beings

Zarathushtra and the Buddha were both in agreement that the devas played no role in upholding the Order of the world. The devas were too much identified with exclusive classes to be accepted as providers of a just order. The Ṛgveda describes the greatest of the devas, Indra, the war-god, as disregarding the moral order, in contrast to the greatest asura, Varuna, who is described as the guardian of moral law.[276] While Zarathushtra seems to have adopted the asuras for their link with the moral order, the Buddha appears to have lost faith in gods and their capacity of securing a just order. In order to comprehend their approach to the devas (or simply their approach to the gods), there should be a further study of Zarathushtra's and the Buddha's perception of the "divine".

The concept of divinity in Buddhism is basically different from that in Zarathushtrianism. At the time of the Buddha the "ahu..." gods had long since been forgotten in India. The coeval Brahmanic texts alluded to the asuras as untrue, mischievous beings (S.B.9.2.3.2-3). Gautama Buddha was only acquainted with the devas as celestial beings. The insight he had into the devas made him found a religion "independent" of gods.[277] Therefore the Buddha did not need to impeach the devas like his Aryan predecessor simply because he

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[276]RV 1.54.7-8: "Thou goest on from fight to fight intrepidly, destroying castle after castle here with strength...Thou Indra slewest...thou hast struck down...(Indra is a warrior who does not know any law)."
RV 1.25.10: "Varuna, true to holy law, sits down among his people; he most wise, sits to govern all." (Griffith's translation).

[277]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.IX: The gods served as elements of symbolism in the Buddha's teaching.
Glasenapp, Buddhism a Non-Theistic Religion, op.cit., p.30-31.

did not base his creed on worship of the devas. As such, the Buddha's attitude towards Indra or Brahmā could not have been identical with Zarathushtra's.

Like the Buddha, Zarathushtra was born into a tradition where a plurality of gods were venerated. However the Aryan religion in the Vedic period exposed Zarathushtra to two divisions of deities (asuras and devas). Moreover, to Zarathushtra the "divine" was an essential figure, but not all gods were considered by him worthy of worship. Zarathushtra demonstrated a strong averision for the "devic" group of gods whose liturgy, through the support of powerful warrior and priestly classes, had overturned the cult of asuras. The devas were the projection of those who towered above the society, namely the ruling class and the priestly class dependent on the former.

The dissimilitude between Zarathushtra's epoch and the Buddha's consisted in the difference between the head god. Indra, the probable chief god in Zarathushtra's time represented the warrior class, and Brahmā, the head god in the Buddha's time, represented the priestly class. Each god incarnated the group which actually imposed itself on the society. The struggle of the two wise men was to prune these gods as valued beings. While Zarathushtra qualified them as false gods (Y.49.4) the Buddha demonstrated that the sacred position traditionally attributed to the "devas" was erroneous.[278]

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[278]D.N.1.19, p.32: "certain gods...through the loss of their self-control...fall from that state." Devas in Buddhism are not eternal."
D.N.1.222, p.282: "...the Great Brahmā said: I do not know...where those four great elements...cease. Therefore you have acted ill, in that ignoring the Exalted One. Go you now, return to the Exalted One, ask him the question." Devas in Buddhism are not omniscient, their knowledge is inferior to that of Buddha.
D.N.2.15, p.12: "It is the rule, brethern, that when a Bodhisat issues from his mother's womb, there is made manifest
throughout the univers, an infinite and splendid radiance passing the glory of gods". If some

While the Buddha undermined the spiritual authority of the devas, Zarathushtra had recourse to tne ahuras to malign them. For Zarathushtra the devas were to be blamed for all the bad spirit which ruled his land.[279] He encouraged his people to worship Ahura Mazda instead. The Buddha renewed relations with the devas and acknowledged them as beings endowed with mysterious power, but this did not mean that the devas were going to be granted the same place they occupied in Brahmanism. After all, thaumaturges were also acknowledged to possess supernatural skills. The devas were "doomed" to become simple disciples of the Buddha; they were stripped of their spiritual and holy value.[280]

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beings should be held for sacred, those should be the enlightened humans and not the devas.
D.N.2.46, p.37: "...the Great Brahmā bowing down before the Exalted One he passed round..." The supreme deva acknowledges the Buddha's superiority and sanctity.
M.N.3.134, p.180: "But, Aggivessama, devas and mankind have this longing, that is to say for the five strands of sense-pleasures." Devas are not really different from common humans.

[279]Gathas, Y.44.20: "Have the devas ever exercised good dominion? And this I ask of those who see, how for the devas sake (cult), the karapans (priests) and the usig gave the cattle to violence." (Moulton's translation).

[280]D.N.2.39, p.32: "Thereupon that Great Brahmā when he became aware in thought of the thoughrs of Vipassi (Buddha Supreme), spoke to him in verse: - Teach us the Truth; there who'll understand...Thereupon Vipassi, the Exalted One, Arahant, Buddha Supreme, made respone in verse to that great Brahmā: - Let those that hear renounce thei empty faith (in rites and gods)."
D.N.2.221, p.260: "The Three-and-Thirty, verily both gods and lord, rejoice, Tathagata (Buddha) they honour and the Cosmic Law Sublime."
D.N.1.116, p.149: "Truly, sirs, many gods and men believe in the Samana Gotama."
M.N.1.344, p.9: "...Tathagata (Buddha) arises in the worlf...endowed with (right) knowledge and conduct, teacher of devas and men..."
A.N.3.332.6, p.234: "Those devas who have perfect faith in the Buddha, Dharma, the Order and the virtues (have the knowledge)."

Manifestly the Buddha was not more sympathetic to the devas than was Zarathushtra. Sometimes ridiculing the devas, other times disparaging them,[281] the Buddha trivialized the chief deva of his time, Brahmā, by dividing him into several Brahmās.[282] Of the two eminent devas (Brahmā and Indra) who drew the attention of the Buddha, the most severe treatment was reserved to Brahmā because Brahmā was the deva who reflected the priestly class. The Buddha's discourses on Brahmā "obviously served the purpose of presenting Brahmanical views as inadequate".[283] Also at the early Buddhist-Brahmanic epoch Śakra/Indra was already eclipsed by Brahmā. By reconsidering Śakra, intact without dividing him into several divinities, the Buddha was giving importance to his own caste, as Śakra/Indra represented the kṣatriya class. After all, the Buddha could have avoided mentioning Indra who had become an obsolete deity at his time. Instead he chose to revive "the Vedic conception of Indra as the most powerful or Monarch of the gods".[284]

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[281]Glasenapp, Buddhism a Non-Theistic Religion, op. cit., p.22 Cf.Jātaka 144, p.24, p.27.

[282]Marasinghe, op. cit., p.203.
Glasenapp, Buddhism a Non-Theistic Religion, op. cit., p.34.

[283]S.N.5.409.55, p.350: "My friend, even the Brahman World is impermanent, not lasting." The deva Brahmā is not eternal.
S.N.5.232.68, p.208: Brahmā is described as a being who preserves his devahood by adhereing to Buddhist precepts; otherwise the Brahmā can loose his divine status.
D.N.1.222, p.282: "The Great Brahmā said: - I do not know where those four great elements cease." Brahmā is not omniscient.
D.N.3.97, p.93: "Now this verse, Vasettha, was spoken by Brahmā, the Eternal Youth: - The kṣatriya is the best among this folk who put their trust in lineage." Brahmā diffuses the Buddha's view.

[284]Godage, op. cit., p.46.
Marasinghe, op. cit., p.50: "King or chief of gods who is superior to the rest of gods...the most frequently mentioned in the Nikāyas texts is Śakra."
RV 1.174.1: "Thou are the king of all Gods, O Indra."

It is noteworthy that Zarathushtra's Ahura Mazda and the Buddha's Śakra were reminiscent of older Vedic gods,[285] who had relinquished their thrones to new gods.[286] Apparently the reign of their predecessors (Varuna for Ahura Mazda and Indra for Śakra) was felt by our reformers as an era when a better order prevailed.

This reconsideration of Indra in Buddhism could suggest a major difference with Zarathushtrianism, which strived instead to oust the war-god (Y.44.16). However, this is not exactly the case. Buddhism plunged Indra into a process of transformation. The new Indra was no longer a drunken wild god, as he was in the time of Zarathushtra.[287] Buddhism tamed Indra into an "agent of morality", abiding in peace and protecting animals.[288] Śakra/Indra

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D.N.2.267, p.302: "By Śakra (Indra), Lord of Thirty-and-Three gods."
D.N.2.277, p.311: Buddha addresses Śakra as "ruler of gods".

[285]Wash Edward Hale, Asura in Early Vedic Religion, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1986, pp. 34, 184 Cf.Y.31.10, p.191.
Firoze C.Davar, "Indo-Iranian Age", Indo-Iranica, vol 23, p.64: In the Younger Avesta Varuna is mentioned as one of Ahura Mazda's 101 names.
Matas, op. cit., pp.64-65.
Griswold, op. cit., p.111.
Breuil, op. cit., p.87.
Marasinghe, op. cit., p.39.

[286]Kunte, op. cit., p.247.
Matas, op. cit., p.54.

[287]RV 8.50.2-3: "...thy soul longs for Soma juice; fill thyself full, O Indra, with the juice we shed."
RV 1.165.10: "For I am known as terrible, O Maruts: I, Indra, am the Lord of what I ruined."
RV 4.17: Indra is decribed killing, destroying, plundering, stealing cattle...

[288]S.N.1.222.11, pp.286-287: The Buddhist Śakra commends "forbearance and gentleness, he belongs to the sphere of persuasion and mildness, of concord, amity, and harmony."
Jātaka 17.29, p.147: The Buddhist Śakra is opposed to the drinking of intoxicants.
Jātaka 9.10-11, p.107: The Buddhist Śakra is opposed to the sacrifice of animals.

retained the moral side of the Vedic Indra in Buddhism, in the same way that Ahura Mazda embodied the ethical components of the Vedic Varuna.[289]

Śakra/Indra is brought closer to Ahura Mazda in his insistence on ethical acts and his opposition to animal sacrifices. This is an important contrast between the Vedic Indra, who made sacrifice the essence of devahood and imposed himself on other gods, and the Buddhist Indra who became the chief of gods by fulfilling moral actions.[290]

Devahood in Buddhism did not have the same sense as in the Vedic-Brahmanic tradition. In the Vedic context, Śakra's opposition to sacrifices disqualified him of devahood as devas depended on sacrifices.[291] Śakra's opposition to sacrifices had drawn him closer to the asuras. The age-old cultic conflict, which had brought the asuras and the devas into confrontation in Zarathushtra's time, thus reverberated in the era of Buddhism, leading to the emergence of a new category of gods, and even a new type of theism.

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[289]F.B.J.Kuiper, "Remarks in the Avestan Hymn to Mithra", Indo-Iranian Journal, 1961-62, vol.V p.54, 55 Cf. RV 1.24.14, RV 8.42.1.
Griswold, op. cit., p.115
Godage, op. cit., p.67-69.

[290]RV 10.124.3: Sacrifice is the essence of Indra's devahood.
S.N.1.227.11, p.293: "In the days...when Śakra, ruler of the gods, was a man, he undertook and carried out seven rules of conduct, whereby he attained his celestial sovereignty."

[291]RV 10.124.3: Agni adresses these words to the Father Asura: "From the non-sacrificial (side) I go to the sacrificial side (to the side of devas)." (Matas' translation).
S.B.5.1.1.1-2.

The Struggle against Sacrificial Rituals

The cultic dissension between the asuras and the devas appears to have been an ardent subject at the early Zarathushtrian-Vedic period. It generated a polemical debate as much in the Ṛgveda as in the Gathas. The most problematic practices seem to have been sacrifices addressed to devas. The asuras were not related to this cult.[292] The Gathas represent the asuras as disinterested and incorruptible entities.[293] Such a god, or as R.W.Rogers propounds, such a definition of god without a being,[294] made the sole purpose of sacrifices invalid. The Gathic hymns simply labled sacrifices as depraved practices.[295] Buddhism took the same stand regarding sacrificial rituals as Zarathushtrianism (Sutta Nipāta, 115 p.21 Vasala Sutta).[296] The principal recipients of the sacrifices (devas) were described as unspiritual beings, no more powerful than thaumaturges.[297] The Brahmā Sahampati and Śakra of Buddhism were ascribed

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[292]RV 5.62.6: The Asuras Varuna and Mitra are depicted as "gods without bloody hands. RV 10.124.3-4: Agni says: "From the (part) that is disconnected from the sacrifice I go to the part that is connected with the sacrifice. I tarried many a year within this altar: I have the Father Asura for my choice in (the Deva) Indra." (Matas' translation).

[293]Gathas, Y.29.4: "He Ahura, is the decider. So shall it be as he shall will." The priests cannot decide for him with sacrifices.

[294]Rogers, op. cit., p.22. Ahura Mazda, as Rogers says, is not a name it is a definition of god (Wise Lord). At the Vedic period this was a new phenomena as all other gods were invoked by specific names.

[295]Gathas, Y.32.8, Y.32.14, Y.44.20, Y.48.10.
Firoze C.Davar, "Indo-Iranian Age", Indo-Iranica, 1970, vol.23 no.1 p.68.

[296]D.N.I.9 p.15, D.N.I.12 p.25, D.N.18.12-13 p.242.

[297]In the Brāhmanas the devas could commit sins and still retain their sanctity whereas in the Buddhist canon not only are the devas not sacred beings, they they are only beings enjoying

limited powers. Moreover they were given similar characteristics to those of asuras by being detached from any kind of sacrificial offerings.[298]

Both Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism advocated good deeds over useless sacrifices to devas. The change in the sense of the words **sumati-sūkta-sukṛta** from the Vedas to the Gathas (*humata-hūkhta-huvaršta*) exposes the very nature of Zarathushtra's reform. The purely ceremonial triad meaning prayer-hymn-sacrifice was redefined as good thought-good word-good deed.[299] Identically the Vedic-Brahamanic concept of sacrifice was revised before it was admitted in Buddhism Sacrifice was to be inherent to good thoughts and deeds.[300] The

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an ephemeral heavenly life which would cease as soon as they become sinful.
S.B.1.2.3.2: "Indra, assuredly, was free from that (sin), for he is a god."
D.N.1.17-21: "The devas are not eternal, they come to being with the evolution of the world and can fall from their heavenly state if corrupted."
D.N.1.216-219, 222: The gods have less knowledge than enlightened beings.
D.N.2.221, p.260: "The Three-and-Thirty, verily both gods and lord, rejoice, Tathagata they honour and the cosmic law sublime." The gods venerate enlightened beings, and not the other way around."

[298]Sutta Nipāta 309, p.51: Śakra/Indra in Buddhism is opposed to animal sacrifices.
D.N.1.234, p.319: "Brahmā is free from wordly care." Brahmā is detached from material offerings.

[299]Moulton, Early Zarathushtrianism, op. cit., p.143.
Gathas, Y.47.1: "By his holy spirit and by best though, deed and word, in accordance with the Law..."
Y.33.14: "As an offering (sacrifice) Zarathushtra brings the life of his own body, the choiceness of good thought, action, and speech, unto Mazdah, unto Asa, Obedience and Khshatra (Dominion)." (Moulton's translation).

[300]D.N.1.138-140 p.179-183.
D.N.1.157, p.202: "The Buddhist Eightfold Path: right views, right aspirations, right speech, right action, right means of livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right ecstasy in self-concentration."

advocated "moral state" was to adhere to **ahimsā** "the habit of causing no injury to any living thing."[301]

This compassionate attitude towards animals was earlier professed by Zarathushtra. Paul du Breuil asserts: "La converision intégrale que voulut (Zarathushtra) quant au respect de la vie animale, apparaît bien comme la première exprimée à ce niveau, avant l'**ahimsā** du jaînisme et la compassion du bouddhisme."[302] Du Breuil suggests that Zarathushtra's attitude stimulated a radical revolution in the behaviour of the humans vis-à-vis other living creatures. Men who were taught to sacrifice animals were now being told to protect them as part of their sacred duty.[303]

In the Gathas, the concern about the cow exceeds by far the interest in other animals (Y.34.14, Y.48.7, Y.51.14). Du Breuil surmised that Zarathushtra chose the cow as a prototype for all animals and therefore his call for the protection of the cattle was a call for

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[301]D.N.1.141, p.180: "... at that sacrifice neither were any oxen slain, neither goats, nor fouls, nor fatted pigs, nor were any kinds of living creatures put to death. No trees were cut down to be used as posts..."
Sutta Nipāta 116, p.21: "Whosoever in this world harms living being, whether once or twice born, and in whom there is no
compassion for living beigs, let one know him as an outcast."
D.N.1.4, p.3: "Putting away the killing of living things, Gotama the recluse holds aloof from the destruction of life."

[302]Du Breuil, op. cit., p.113.

[303]Du Breuil, op. cit., pp.62-63, 104.
Gathas, Y.39.1-2: "So we reverence our own soul and those of domestic animals...and the souls of wild creatures, in so far as they are not harmful". (Boyce's translation).
Y.32.12: "Mazda les maudits...ceux qui massacrent les animaux de gaité de coeur." (Darmesteter's translation).
Also Y.29, Y.32.15.

the safeguard of all living-beings.[304] It appeared to Kosambi that the Indo-Iranian society of the Vedic period was mostly pastoral and hence the victims of the sacrifices were mainly cows.[305]

It also seems that cattle were still valorised at the time of the Buddha. The Buddha demonstrated much sensitivity regarding the life of the cow: "Cattle are our friends, just like parents and other relatives, for cultivation depends upon them. They give food, strength, freshness of complexion and happiness. Knowing this, the brahmans of old did not kill cattle (Sutta Nipāta 295-6 Kosambi p.102)."

Zarathushtra was also persuaded that the sacrifice of cattle had not always been part of the tradition. As discussed earlier, he criticized *Yima* (Vedic *Yama*), the first earthly king according to the Indo-Iranian mythology, for having instituted the sacrifice of the cow (Y.32.8). The chapter on this subject seems not to have been closed in the Gathas. The Sutta Nipāta also recollects a hoary past when a king, misled by the brahmans, was induced to establish the sacrifice of cattle (Sutta Nipāta 306-311 p.51).

However, the sense, purpose and scope of these animal sacrifices appear to have been changed from the epoch of Zarathushtra to the time of the Buddha. The sacrifices which were held at the time of Zarathushtra responded essentially to the demands of warriors even if the performers of the rite were priests (*karapans*). The Soma ritual to which Zarathushtra alluded twice in the Gathas (Y.32.14, Y.48.10) and which he denounced vehemently, was according

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[304]Du Breuil, op. cit., pp.84, 116.

[305]Kosambi, op. cit., p.102.

to many scholars a ritual produced before martial expeditions.[306] The Soma ritual celebrated primarily a war god (Indra), Soma was the strength of Indra. The sacrifice served to celebrate and commemorate the war god's feats. The Soma represented the **kṣatra**, the power of war, the power of warriors.[307] Probably because the warrior class dominated the society, the Soma ritual, which was dedicated to them,[308] was recognized as "the" Sacrifice. The Soma sacrifice gathered then in itself the worship of all devas, and all types of sacrifices were met "in concerto" in this ritual.[309]

Du Breuil asserts that the Buddha disapproved of the Soma ritual as much as his Aryan predecessor Zarathushtra.[310] It is certain that the Soma sacrifice continued to be

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[306]Haug, op. cit., pp.291-292.
Griswold, op. cit., pp.92-93, 212.
Hillebrandt, op. cit., p.167 Cf.RV 1.110.7: "May we win in fight over those who do not press (the Soma)." p.183: "Just as in his battle against Vṛtra, Indra acquires the strength through Soma, so does the prince to whose Soma sacrifice Indra comes, gain the power to strike his enemies." Cf.RV 13.92.17

[307]Kunte, op. cit., p.181.

[308]RV 7.21.2: On to the rite they move, the grass they scatter, these Soma-drinkers eloquent in synod. Hither, for men to grasp, are brought the press-stones, far-thundering, famous, strong, that wait on heroes." Description of the Soma rite performed before warriors.

[309]RV 8.2.18: "The Gods seek him who presses out the Soma." (Griffith's translation). All the devas are pleased by the Soma sacrifice.
Hinduism, The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia, Chicago, 15th ed., 1992, vol.20 p.530: "The main ritual activity referred to in the Ṛgveda is the Soma sacrifice."
Matas, op. cit., p.77 Cf. H.Hubert et M.Mauss, "Essais sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice", pp.297-300.
Griswold, op. cit., p.50.

[310]Gonda, The Dual Deities, op. cit., p.365: As the Iranian Haoma, "the most important oblation...(was) not widely different from the Vedic ritual and concepts, a common Indo-Iranian origin of this Soma cult may be considered beyond controversy."
Du Breuil, op. cit., p.107.

performed even after the advent of Buddhism. Bhattacharya alleges that the "Vedic religion which prevailed in the Buddha's time encouraged, for sacrificial purposes, the killing of animals and the drinking of strong liquors."[311] Now which Aryan sacrificial ritual, other than the celebrated Soma sacrifice, involved both animal slaughtering and the use of intoxicants? A critique of the Soma liquor is clearly implied in Buddhist literature. The god Śakra/Indra, for example who was the Soma drinker par excellence in Vedic literature, is depicted as having an averision for all intoxicants.[312] And furthermore, in many instances, Buddhism censured intoxicants.[313]

However at the time of the Buddha the Soma sacrifice no longer represented the sacrifice par excellence as it had in the early Zarathushtrian-Vedic period. The original Soma sacrifice was supplanted by a variety of Soma sacrifices and other types of sacrifices.[314]

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[311]Bhattacharya, op. cit., p.431.

[312]Godage, op. cit., p.60 Cf. Jātaka V 15-18 verses 36-59.
Marasinghe, op. cit., p.250: "It is true that we do not find the Buddhist gods taking such drinks."

[313]A.N.3.35.5, p.26: "When a woman or a man has taken refuge in the Buddha...(he or she) abstains from taking life...and from indulging in spirituous liquor, causing idleness."
M.N.2.51, p.248: "Ghatikara, the potter, sire, is restrained from onslaught on creatures...restrained from occasions of sloth engendered by strong drinks and spirits. Ghatikara is possessed of unwavering confidence in the Awakened one (Buddha)...he is possessed of moral habits that are dear to Aryans."
D.N. I.123 p.149, D.N. I.146 p.162.

[314]The Brāhmanas which prolonge the Vedas testify the development of a variety of Soma rituals and non-Soma sacrifices inexistant in the Ṛgveda: Soma sacrifices - Agnistoma, Gavamayana, Sarvamedha, Puruṣamedha (S.B 1.6.2.13) - non-Soma Sacrifices - Rājāsuya Dvadasaha.
Monier-Williams, Religious Thought and Life in India, op. cit., p.20: On the date of the Brāhmanas.

The late Ṛgvedic hymns, with the later Brahamanas, give broad hints on the changes which occurred in the meantime in India. It appears that the most important sacrifices, like the Soma, were divested of their exclusively martial tinge.[315]

The latest of all Ṛgvedic books, the tenth mandala, opened a new era of the Indo-Aryan religion, were Vedism merged into Brahmanism. From this time forward sacrifice gained more and more importance and therefore rituals were to become more elaborate. The Puruṣa Sūkta of the tenth book (RV X.90) made sacrifice the essence of the world. The sacrifice of the divine Puruṣa is said to have led to the generation of gods, rites, humans and even castes. The Brāhmanas recount that the devas gained their immortality through sacrifice.[316] With the rise of Brahmanism Sacrifice replaced even ṛta (Zarathushtrian *Arta*, Buddhist *Dharma*). The Cosmic and Moral Order (ṛta) of the world was declared to be nothing else but sacrifice.[317] Consequently sacrifice was "raised to the highest status",[318] since it was even placed above gods. The sacrifice was not expressed by the brahmans as abstinence from worldly pleasures or giving of alms (sacrifice was expressed differently in Buddhism D.N.1.144, p.181, D.N.1.146, p.182), but was manifested by the offering of a victim.[319] They inculcated the idea that the sacrifices to the gods could be accepted only

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[315]RV 9.13.3, RV 9.25.4, RV 9.28.2, RV 9.64.8, RV 9.65.2.

[316]S.B.1.6.2.1: "Verily by means of sacrifice, the gods made the conquest (of the world of heaven)."

[317]Śatapatha Brāhmana 1.3.4.16.

[318]Chattopadhyaya, op. cit., vol.II p.30.

[319]Even the Soma plant is sacrificed as it were a real victim in flesh.
Atharva Veda 9.4.1-15: "...Bound (to the sacrificial post, he became) the portion of the

through their hands, because only they could perform them properly and they defamed those who did not sacrifice.[320] This enabled them to conduct lucrative ceremonies. The brahmans gave a "theological legend in support of their contention",[321] associating themselves with the god who incarnated sacrifice and who supplanted Puruṣa.[322] They claimed that Brahmā was their ancestor.[323] The brahmans alleged that men and gods owed their existence to them, as without their sacrifice, they asserted, men and devas could not live.[324] Thus brahmans upheld the importance of their occupation by presenting sacrifices as the most important and

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devas, the Mighty One chose (to be) a drink of Soma; what was his body became a great pressin stone...His rump fell to the share of the Adityas, his thighs fell to the share of Bṛhaspati, his tail fell to the share of god Vata, with it he shakes to the plants..."

[320]Gopatha Brāhmaṇa 1.3.1-2.
Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 7.32.8.

[321]Rhys Davids, Dialogues of the Buddha, op. cit., p.99.

[322]Alf Hiltebeitel, "Hinduism", The Encyclopedia of Religion, New York, Macmillan Publishing Co, 1987, vol.6 p.340: "Puruṣa identified with Prajāpati...became the prototype for the
classical god Brahmā."

[323]M.N.2.84, p.273, "Brahmans speak thus. .Only Brahmans form the best caste, all other castes are low, brahmans are own sons of Brahmā, born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, formed by Brahmā, heirs to Brahmā."
D.N.I.90, p.112.

[324]S.B.1.2.5.24: "No sacrificial food then came to the gods from this world, for the gods subsist on what is offered up from this world."
Ganesh U.Thite, Sacrifice in the Brāhmana-Texts, Poona, Univerisity of Poona, 1975, p.235
Cf. Jaminiya Brāhmaṇa: "They say: if the sacrifice is spread upwards, Gods alone will live and not men; if spread downwards men only will live and not Gods."

complex task in the world. Pande alleges that ritual which was originally a simple act was transformed into a complex affair.[325]

The Aryan religion with which Zarathushtra dealt was one responding to the exigencies of a warrior class which was in cooperation with a priestly class. Brahmanism, which was probably the religion the Buddha confronted, claimed to be "the inheritance of the Vedic tradition...certainly it was the exploitation of the priestly caste which came into being after the age of the Ṛgveda."[326]

The Rulers of the Society on Trial

Historically, the last book of the Ṛgveda is the point of demarcation between two separate eras. At the end of the Vedic period there was a shift from a society built on the principles of a warrior aristocracy into a society remodelled according to the aspirations of a hieratical class. As discussed in the earlier chapters Zarathushtra appeared at the Ṛgvedic period when the Indo-Iranians had still not severed and the Buddha lived during the Brahmanic period after this severance. The fact that their movement developed in two different historical periods explains by itself the main differences of approach between Early Zarathushtrianism and Early Buddhism towards the society.

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[325]Pande, op. cit., p.273.
Thite, op. cit., p.161: "The sacrifice was growing in the period of Brahmaṇas. It was becoming more and more complex also."

[326]Masson-Oursel, op. cit., p.129.

However the difference in historical contexts had only an impact on the form of Zarathushtra's and the Buddha's reform. The base of their movement was the same. Zarathushtra and the Buddha were fighting against the arrogance of dominating classes. Zarathushtra's antagonism to the warrior class and the Buddha's resentment against the priestly class draws the two reformers closer in that in both periods the knightly class and the clerical order made a common cause.[327]

As discussed earlier, in Zarathushtra's time, the Aryan society was devoted to conquest and war. The Ṛgveda depicts a heroic age in which inevitably warriors had obtained preeminence. At this time the ecclesiastics were at the service of the warfaring class. As guardians of religion they were invited to replace the reigning supreme god Varuna by the war god Indra, and were solicited to sanctify war-related activities. Their task was to sublimate the image of the knightly class.[328] Both classes rested upon the viś (the working

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[327]Gathas, Y.48.10: In this stanza we are told that the kavis (rulers of the warrior class) and the karapans (priests) were associated while acting in the society.
S.B.6.4.4.13: "The brahman and the kṣatriya never go behind the vaiśya and the śūdra.
D.N.2.72, p.78: The king (the ruling kṣatriya) speaks to his prime-minister the brahman Vassakara.

[328]Griswold, op. cit., pp.50, 178 Cf. RV 1.32.6: "Indra...the mighty hero, the impetuous warrior" RV 2.12 1: "He who surpassed the gods."
Basu, op. cit., p.18: The warriors needed the collaboration of the priestly class "for the smooth running of the social and political machinery."
Matas, op. cit., p.1.
Gnoli, op. cit., p.186.
Marasinghe, op. cit., p.102.
Haug, op. cit., p.288.

class).[329] They drew their wealth from the latter. The working class had to yield to the warriors because of their relative powerlessness.[330]

Zarathushtra's reformation fits into this historical context. Zarathushtra generated a movement to thwart the military order. Thereby the hymns ascribed to him denounced a system which made religion an annex of militarism and a means to legitimize the rule and activities of the military class.[331]

By the end of the Vedic period the conquests were gradually ending and the warrior class was being restrained by its own nascent elites (non-fighting land gentry, king). The priestly class found an opportunity to enhance its position in relation to the warrior class.[332] The last book of the Ṛgveda announced this turning point with the **Puruṣa Sūkta**.[333] From this myth on, the brahmans took over the control of their scriptures. There they placed themselves ahead of the warriors in ranking.[334] The supreme god henceforth represented their class and no longer warriors', the religious hymns no longer praised knightly activities. The chief god

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[329]Gathas, Y.46.11: "The karapans (priests) and the kavis (warriors) have subdued mankind to the yoke of their dominion". (Duchesne-Guillmin's translation).

[330]Gathas, Y.32.10: "...(the warriors) who lay waste the pastures and take arms against the righteous." Y.32.11: "(the warriors) who strive with the great to deprive master and mistress of their inheritance." (Duchesne-Guillemin's translation).
Y.29.3: "Parmi ces choses, on ne peut savoir celle par quoi les hauts dirigent les pauvres." (Kellens and Pirart translation).

[331]Cf. Chapter 1 pp.17-18 of the thesis.

[332]Macdonald, op. cit., p.80: "Brahman's reign begins to dawn towards the end of the Vedic period "

[333]Ṛgveda, 10.90.

[334]Aitareya Brāhmana 8.1: "Brahmā is prior to Kṣatra."

became Brahmā. Appearing in the last book of the Ṛgveda,[335] he incarnated sacrifice, the main function of the priests.[336] The religious texts which followed the composition of the Vedas were also dedicated to sacrifices. With the custody of the sacred texts, the brahmans seized the opportunity to present themselves as gods, descendants of the supreme god, the appointed mediators between earth and gods.[337]

In the Buddhist literature the brahmans earned their image as exploiters of the society. They were exposed as "a vain greedy priestcraft...the embodied evil genius...of the Indian people."[338] The social state which was based according to the discriminatory taste of the brahmans was dismissed and all their social claims founded on the basis of their divine origin was said to be a false pretext to take advantage of the common people:

> On the contrary, brahmanees, the wives of brahmans, are known to be fertile, are seen to be with child, bringing forth and nurising children. And yet it is these very womb-born brahmans who say that...brahmans are genuine children

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[335]Glasenapp, Brahmā et Bouddha, Paris, Payot, 1937, pp.75, 105.
Oldenberg, op. cit., p.26 footnote, pp.28-29: Indra and Agni leave their place to Brahmā who becomes nearest to the throne of Puruṣa/Prajāpati creator.

[336]S.B.1.5.2.12: "For guardians of the sacrifice, indeed, are those brahmans versed in the sacred writ."

[337]S.B.4.3.4.4: "There are two kinds of gods. One kind comprises the celestial or divine deities whereas the learned brahmans versed in the sacred lore are human gods or gods amongst men."
Taittriya Brāhmaṇa 1.2.6.7.
Maitrayani Saṁhitā 1.4.6.14.

[338]Oldenberg, op. cit., p.13.
Buddhist texts probably reacted to Brahmanic assertions such as in S.B.4.3.4.4: "Oblations (offered in sacrifice) are homage or gift offered to divine deities whereas human gods or brahmans are propitiated with Dakaṣiṇā or sacrificial fee."

> of Brahmā, born from his mouth; his offspring, his creation, and his heirs! By this they make travesty of the nature of Brahmā. It is false what they say.
> (D.N.3.81-82, p.78)

Furthermore the Buddha accused the brahmans of having stripped religion of any higher morality, abusing the sacred to the detriment of the society for lucrative and political purposes. As a result, the Buddha redefined religion in order to break it away with sectional interests. Following his religious amendments, the Buddha assigned a more modest position to the brahmans (to those he considered to represent religion) in the society.[339]

It may seem after this debate that Zarathushtra and the Buddha re-evaluated their society by challenging one social category of their society. It is true that the priestly class and the warrior class were, as the evolution of the Indo-Iranian civilization demonstrated, in some ways rivals, as each class sought to gain preeminence over the other. But it would be too simplistic to assert that Zarathushtra attacked the warrior class and the Buddha rebuked the priestly class because the former was a priest (Y.33.6) and the latter a kṣatriya (Sutta Nipāta Khuddaka Nikāya vol.I pp.68-69 Cf. Chakravarti p.12).[340] A comprehensive survey of Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism informs us that the approach of both movements towards their society was more mature.

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[339]A.N.3.362.6, p.258: "And a brahman's, Master Gotama, what is his aim, quest and the rest? - Wealth is his aim, wisdom is his quest, mantras are his resolve, sacrifices his want, Brahmā-World his ideal. - And a recluses, Master Gotama..? - Patience and forbearance are his aim, wisdom is his quest, virtue is his resolve, nothing is his want, Nirvana his ideal."
D.N.2.248, p.278: "Leaving the world means little power and little gain: to be a brahman brings great power and great gain."

[340]Varma, op. cit., pp.20, 363.
Breuil, op. cit., pp.61, 68-69.

During the whole evolution of the Aryan Civilization from the Zarathushtrian-Vedic period up to the Post-Vedic-Buddhist period, the warrior class and the clerical order formed the superior strata of the society. Throughout this long period the knightly class and the priestly class remained closely linked and they distinguished themselves from the viś (plebeians).[341] The warriors saw to the physical subjection of the viś and the priests to the "spiritual".

The primacy of the knightly class over the priestly or the brahmanic over the kṣatriya was nominal. The struggle for the social preeminence between the priestly and knightly classes was a question of prestige. Both classes jointly lorded over the society and helped each other maintain their ascendancy. They constituted a complementary pair. The warrior class saw to the well-being of the priestly class, and the priestly class to the temporal lordship of the warrior class.[342]

The Gathas as well as the Dīgha Nikāya evince the preceding assertions. The author of the Gathic hymns was aware of the united stand of the warfaring rulers (*kavis*) and the clergy (*karapans*). Zarathushtra complained of the activities of the war-lords, but he held

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[341]RV 4.50.9, RV 2.12.6.

[342]S.B.1.3.4.15: "(The priest) makes the kṣatra superior to the viś. Hence the people here serve, from a lower position, the kṣatriya seated above them."
S.B.2.1.4.12: "Prajāpati generated the brahmans with ether; the kṣatra with heaven! The viś (the common people were not generated by heavenly elements).
S.B.2.5.4.8: "Agni is the priesthood, and Indra is the nobility; having allied these two, having closely united the priesthood with the nobility..."
M.N.2.128, p.310: "(Buddha asks the brahman Sanjaya) Now revered sir, could there be any distinction, any difference between these four castes. - There are, sire, the four castes; kṣatriyas, brahmans, vaiśyas and śūdras. Among these four castes, sire, two are pointed to as chief: the kṣatriyas and the brahmans."

both warriors and priests responsible for the misrule of his land (Y.46.11:"By their dominion the *karapans* and the *kavis* accustomed mankind to evil actions"). It also appears from Yasna 48.10 that the sacrificing priests assisted the war-lord in their enterprises, holding for the latter sacrificial rituals which encouraged destructive excurisions:[343]

> When, O Mazda, will the warriors understand the message? When wilt thou smite this filth of drink through which the sacrificers (karapans) wickedly and the evil masters of the countries (kavis) of their own will commit their deeds of malice? (Duchesne-Guillemin's translation Y.48.10)

The same pattern reappears somehow in the Buddhist Nikāyas. Priests serve as chaplains to kings (the kṣatriya par excellence), holding ceremonies in their honour and influencing them on their decisions (D.N.I.135, pp.175-176) and in exchange the king rewarded the priests opulently (D.N.I.87, p.108, D.N.I.127, p.173). As is rendered obvious by the Brāhmanas and the Pali Canon, the warrior class had certainly not disappeared. The chief of warriors who was once a primus inter pares, by this time was incarnated in the person of a despotic king.[344] The king is stated to govern arbitrarily and to exploit his subjects,[345] as did the warfaring rulers in Zarathushtra's time. The difference in the Buddha's period from that of Zarathushtra's was that the whole group of ruling war-lords and their warriors were replaced by officers and soldiers owing loyalty to the king. This contrast between the two periods was largely due to the "growing caste consolidation based on hereditary allocation

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[343]Cf. Chapter 1, p.32.

[344]Chakravarti, op. cit., p.168 Cf. J.P. Sharma, Republics in Ancient India, p.62. S.B.5.4.4.7: "The king is exempt from, or beyond the reach of punishment."

[345]Chakravarti, op. cit., pp.161-162 Cf. S.N.I, p.75, S.N.I, pp.30, 89.

of power, status and esteem."[346] At the Buddha's time the classification of the people was therefore not based on their occupation but on their birth, whereas in Zarathushtra's time people were categorized according to the activity in which they were engaged. Hence the Buddha could not have had the same experience of the warrior class as Zarathushtra, as many kṣatriyas of his time had renounced military life. Those who had not were likely to have become military officers under the command of the regal (D.N.I.51, p.68: "There are, Sir, a number of ordinary crafts: mahouts, horsemen, charioteers, archers...high military officers of royal birth, military scouts..."). There are no accounts of predatory warbands plundering the viś, like those found in the Gathas in the Dīgha Nikāya.

Thus the Buddha's attitude towards the kṣatriya class contrasted with Zarathushtra's disposition vis-à-vis the warrior class of its own time. The Buddha, while confronting the brahmans, insisted upon humbling their caste before the kṣatriyas.[347] The Buddha's reaction was due to the fact that the brahmanical group was shrewdly "using the existing caste system to their own benefit."[348] The brahmans had affirmed their ascendance without any temporal power; they had appropriated as such a quantity of unjustified advantages merely by

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[346]Sarao, op. cit., p.7.

[347]D.N.3.97, p.93: "Now this verse, Vasettha, was spoken by Brahmā, the Eternal Youth: The ksahtriya is the best among this folk who put their trust in lineage."
D.N.I.92, p.114-115.

[348]Sarao, op. cit., p.11.

demonstrating themselves as gods on earth.[349] Early Buddhism would be more appropriately qualified as an anti-brahmanical movement targeting essentially the priestly class.[350]

Considering the preceding observations, Early Zarathushtrianism differed from Buddhism as it had reacted against both elitist knightly and clerical classes. These groups were perceived as harmful to the peaceful life of the viś, as the warriors devastated their pastures (Y.31.15, Y.48.3), and priests sacrificed their cattle (Y.51.14). Zarathushtra's movement rose for the defence of the powerless peasants who were at the mercy of the powerful warfaring and clerical classes, but his message of reformation was addressed to all men, no matter the social position, provided they yielded to the peaceful values of the herdsmen and cultivators.[351] Zarathushtra wished to induce the warriors and the priests to partake in the work of the land and thus eliminated the existing conflict of interests between the rulers and the ruled. Zarathushtra had renounced the sacerdotal order to join the working

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[349]M.N.2.150, p.342: "Yet brahmans still consider it thus: - Only brahmans form the best caste...heirs to Brahmā."
S.B.3.2.1.40: "Let no one slay a sacrifice of Soma (a brahman); for by (slaying a brahman) he becomes guilty of a heinous sin (causing the wrath of the gods)."
Basu, op. cit., p.23 Cf. S.B.: "God Soma is the King of us, brahmans; he thereby excludes the brahmans from the power of the King and makes such as are not to be fed or exploited by the King."
Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 8.1, A.B. 8.4, A.B. 8.37.5: The brahmans put themselves above the kṣatriyas.
Pancavimsa Brāhmaṇa 16.6.4, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.7.1.
D.N.I.91-92, p.114: On the claims of the brahmans regarding their social position.

[350]M.N.2.156, p.348-9: Buddha demonstrates that the brahmans cannot be certain of their pure lineage: "And do they know whether their mother's mother (or father's father) back through seven generation consorted ony with brahmans, not with non-brahmans."

[351]Gathas, Y.33.3: "Whoso is most good to the righteous man, be he noble or member of the community or of the brotherhood, Ahura or with diligence cares for the cattle, he shall be hereafter in the pasture of aša and Good Thought." (Moulton's translation).

classes,[352] and had asserted: "He that is no husbandman, o Mazda, however eager he be, has no part in the good message (Y.31.10 Moulton's translation)." Zarathushtra had made of "the care of agriculture and cattle breeding...the religious duty of all."[353] Later, the Aryan society evolved and eventually the warrior class got attached to land as Zarathushtra had wished; however, this did not eliminate the social tensions. The rise of Buddhism at a time when knight errantry had ceased illustrated this fact.[354] As seen earlier, the Buddha also launched a movement of protest against the contemporary social system. He may not have reproved of kṣatriyas; nevertheless, his movement turned out to be beneficial to the non-elitist classes.

The Buddha had recognized the significance of the economic function as being vital to the development of his society. He claimed a social adjustment to the advantage of those who were at the base of the system of production.[355] In the early Buddhist system of stratification, the castes of vaiśyas and śūdras did not exist. In fact the Buddhist classification

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[352]Gathas, Y.33.6, Y.49.4.

[353]Bartholomae, op. cit., p.13.
Gathas, Y.29.6: "...the Creation hath formed thee (the riches of the earth, the cow) for the cattle-tender and the farmer." (Moulton's translation).

[354]Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 8.1, 8.4., 8.37.5.
Also D.N.I.91-92, p.114.

[355]A.N.3.43.5, p.37: "Grihapati, there are these five reasons for getting rich...Take the case of an Aryan disciple with riches gotten by work and zeal, gathered by the strength of arm, earned by the sweat of the brow justly obtained in a lawful way, he makes himself happy and keeps that great happiness."
D.N.1.135, p.176: "Whosoever there be in the king's realm who devote themselves to keeping cattle and the farm, to them let his majesty the king give food and seed-corn."

was not based on the Brahmanical system.[356] Those who were not born brahman or kṣatriya and who had accumulated capital were identified as grihapatis. In the Buddhist system they were "invariably featured along with kṣatriyas and brahmans as people of high status in relation to the rest of society."[357] The Buddha promoted a system in which the status and privilege would not be based on birth, but on the spiritual merit or economic power of the individual.[358] Those who were favored by Buddhism were the emerging classes of rich merchants, skilled craftsmen and well-to-do peasants.

In conclusion the primal diffusion of Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism was very much related to their compatibility with their society and the inflexibility of the established social system with the surrounding world. Both movements appeared at pivotal times when their society was evolving from one state to another. Zarathushtra dispensed his creed in a society

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[356]M.N.2.132, p.314: "The Lord (Buddha) explained the purity of the four castes, and because it was pleasing to us and approves we are delighted."

[357]Chakravarti, op. cit., p.[illegible].
M.N.3.176, p.221: "As children are dear to and beloved by their father, ao are brahmans and householders dear to and beloved by the king."
M.N.3.177, p.222: "...if that wise man came to human status, he would be born into one of those families that are high: a family of rich kṣatriyas or a family of rich brahmans or a family of rich grihapatis, in such a family as is well-to-do, of great possession, of great resources, with abundant gold and silver..."
A.N.3.77.5, p.64: "Growth may be expected and not decline...in those who make themselves the one power among (a group of people)...whether a crowned warrior-rājah...countryman living
on his paternal farm...a guild-master."

[358]Sutta Nipāta 115-141, pp.21-23: "..Whosoever in this world harms living beings, whether once or twice born...let one know him as an outcaste...Whosoever destroys or lays siege to villages and towns, let one know him as an outcaste..."
M.N.1.344, p.9: "A grihapati or a grihapati's son or one born in some respectable family, hears that dharma. When he had heard that dharma, he acquires faith in the (Buddha)."

changing from the pastoral into the agricultural condition.[359] The settled and agricultural society he knew was not in accord with the martial system of the ruling classes. The raids and pillages of lands had drastic consequences for the husbandry. The cultivator needed peace in order to profit from his labor. Zarathushtra's moral concept (favouring husbandry) was close to the social and economic realities of his time and as a consequence it obtained support even among prominent people of his land.[360] Identically, Buddhism spread for the reason it responded to the challenges of its period. Sarao considered the epoch as the "take-off" period of economy.[361] It is noteworthy that Early Buddhism was the contemporary of the Achaemenids,[362] who linked directly India to Europe and Africa, opening new horizons for trade.[363] Merchants travelled[364] and for their own prosperity they went beyond social and cultural differences. Also, the rich farmer intended to sell the surplus of his products no matter what the social status of the purchaser: "The economic necessity cut across caste divisions".[365] To the emerging wealthy classes of merchants and well-to-do peasants, the

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[359]Du Breuil, op. cit., p.113-114.
Kunde, op. cit., p.55.

[360]Meillet, op. cit, pp.67-68, 71.
Gathas, Y.47.3: "The Wise One, created for us the cattle, the source of good fortune, and giving us peace, has created Devotion for the care of cattle." (Duchesne-Guillemin's translation).

[361]Sarao, op. cit., p.4.

[362]Varma, op. cit., p.349.

[363]Gorekar, op. cit., p.124.

[364]D.N.2.87, p.92: "And as far as Aryan people resort, as far as merchants travel, this will become the chief city, Patali-Putta, a centre for the interchange of all kinds of wares."

[365]Sarao, op. cit., p.10.

discriminatory brahmanical social division made no sense. The superseded brahmanical tradition had little to offer to a society looking towards economic efficiency. Buddhism reverberated among those who were the pivot of economy and who were the base of the king's treasury.[366] It was a matter of time before the court opened its doors to the new religion.

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[366]D.N.2.176, p.207: "Long ago, the Great King of Glory, to test that wonderful grihapati-treasurer said...I have need, O Grihapati, of yellow gold. - There the wonderful grihapati reached down to the water with both his hands, and drew up a jar full of yellow gold." D.N.I.61, p.77.

Conclusion

At one point in history the Aryan civilization was at its peak in the Asian continent: Zarathushtrianism effulgent at one end, Buddhism at the other, and in between the mainstream Aryan religion which continued to blossom in the Indian subcontinent. However, two of these three religions distinguished themselves as reforming movements. In fact the mainstream Aryan religion, which continued to evolve without abrupt acts of reform, was the tradition which linked Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism.[367]

Furthermore, the Aryan background was not the only element which drew Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism together. Their founders aspired to renew their world.[368] Both Zarathushtra and the Buddha are famous for their religious reforms. They sought to "ethicize" the religious practices of their time by making people sensitive to animal life and by discouraging sacrifices.[369] Zarathushtra and the Buddha preached that gods who required or depended on these kind of sacrifices were not worthy of worship.[370] The religion and

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[367]Hinduism, An Encyclopaedia of Religion, Edited by Vergilius Ferm, New York, The Philadelphia Library, 1945, p.337.
Hinduism, Larousse Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions, Edited by Rosemary Goring, 1994, p.218.

[368]Du Breuil, op. cit., p.206 Cf.Y.30.9: "Et nous, puissons nous être de ceux qui travaillent au renouveau du monde."

[369]Du Breuil, op. cit., p.352.

[370]In the previous chapters we saw that the devas in Zarathushtra's period required sacrifices in order to help warriors in their military enterprises. The Brahmanic teachings in the Buddha's time depicted devas as beings who owe their existence to sacrifices preformed by brahmans. In both cases the two reformers thought that the worship of the devas was unnecessary.

society Zarathushtra and the Buddha were born into, were strongly intertwined. Many social and economic ideals derived from their religious discourses.[371] Thus Zarathushtra and the Buddha reevaluated both the religious system and the social structure of their time.[372] Once again it should be mentioned that the tradition into which the Buddha was born (Brahmanism) was a prolongation of the Aryan religion (Vedism) prevalent in Zarathushtra's time, and from one period to the other social patterns were not identical.[373] As noted earlier, at least five centuries separate Zarathushtra from the Buddha,[374] and in this lapse of time different elements in society had evolved. During these centuries, the three components of Aryan

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[371]Varma, op. cit., p.32: Religious movements commonly "initiate social and economic teachings."

[372]Gnoli, op. cit., p.187: "Thus the Zoroastrian reformation also bears the signs of social conflict..."
Sen, op. cit., p.IX: "Religious Reform Movements...right from Buddhism to the Aryan Samaj Movement it has been an unbroken record of protest against the caste-system."

[373]W.Crooke. "Hinduism", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, New York, Charles Scribner's Son, 1914, p.687: "Hinduism is the title applied to that form of religion which prevails among the vast majority of the present population of India. The religion is traced back to the Aryan Religion, the Vedic Religion, and Brahmanism."
Taraporewala, op. cit., pp.2-3: "The tradition, the ritual, the social organisation, in short the general outlook on life in Pre-Zarathushtrian Iran is the same as that found in the older parts of the Vedas. We may, therefore, safely take the Vedas as the common foundation of both Indian as well as Iranian thought and culture...Zarathushtra was a contemporary of the earlier composers of the Vedas."
Basham, op. cit., p.4: "(India's) traditions have been preserved without a break down to the present day...India and China have, in fact, the oldest continuous cultural traditions in the world."
Monier-Williams, Religious Thought and Life in India, op. cit., p.2: "Vedism, Brahmanism and Hinduism (are) convenient expressions for the three principal stages or phases in the development of that complicated system."

[374]Basham, op. cit., pp.32, 39.
Gnoli, op. cit., p.228.

society, formed by the three classes of warriors, priests and peasants, witnessed transformations as to their occupation and status. And these changes had repercussions on the social institutions, namely the religious doctrines and cults. While the warrior class occupied the most eminent position in society, the supreme god embodied war. Once the warrior class had renounced its lawless life and the priestly class affirmed itself above the other stratas of society, the head god became a priest god. The rituals were also formulated in agreement with the class which happened to dominate society. At the early Zarathushtrian period, when the military class towered above the hieratic class, the communal sacrificial rituals were essentially performed for the warrior community. The Soma sacrifice, the most important sacrifice then, had no other purpose than to invigorate (with an elixir) the warriors before their enterprises. At a later period, the sacrifices were then held to enhance the position of the brahmans.

The figure of the prominent gods did not cohere with the world of the productive classes. Even the sacrificial rituals were prejudiced against these classes of people, as many of them served to belittle them vis-à-vis the upper classes. Moreover, the costs of these ceremonies weighed directly or indirectly on them.

These social distortions could not have endured without provoking any counter reactions. The claims for socio-religious change posed by Zarathushtra and the Buddha was to an extent the result of the misgovernance and the exclusive character of the upper classes. The warriors in Zarathushtra's period had emerged as agents of disorder, raiding the lands of the peasants and appropriating their cattle. Zarathushtra exerted a movement on behalf of the new developing groups of agriculturors to bring back the warriors into an orderly life. Later,

when the warrior class abandoned its ruthless and acquisitive activities in its own lands, new developments in the Indo-Aryan society engendered firmer lines of social demarcation, supported mostly by the priestly class. The emerging classes of rich traders and wealthy peasants did not tolerate the rigid social order which prevented them from rising in society.[375] Buddhism, which operated against the Brahmanic social system, was responding to the expectations of the evolving society.

Both Zarathushtra and the Buddha appeared at a particular time in history when their society had undergone drastic transformations without the dominating classes accommodating themselves to new conditions. The intervention of these two sages probably made the ruling classes aware of the needs for social change.

Zarathushtra and the Buddha, after their success among the populace, ultimately received royal patronage.[376] However, from the time these religions were adopted by the

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[375]Pande, op. cit., p.314.
Sarao, op. cit., p.8: "New groups of merchants and skilled craftsmen were gaining in wealth and affluence. Their values
were not those of the Vedic priesthood and aristocracy and they no doubt demanded innovations in the field of religion."

[376]S.K.Desai, "Jainism and its Social Contents", Social Contents of Indian Religious Reform Movements, Calcutta, Institute of Historical Studies, 1978, p.23.
Etienne Lamotte, Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien: des Origines à l'ère Saka, Louvain, Institut Orientaliste, 1958, pp.13, 19-20: The king Bimbisara, the Queen Kshema and their son Ajatasatru embraced Buddhism.
Boyce, op. cit., p.4: "(Zarathushtra) converted kavi Vishtaspa, the chief, it seems of another group of Airyas." Cf.Y.51.16-18.
Du Breuil, op. cit., pp.71, 365: "Les édits de tolérance d'Aśoka marquèrent favorablement la doctrine bouddhique. En roi Vishtaspa du bouddhisme..."
Banerjee, op. cit., pp.60-61, p.176: "Buddhism progressed and attained popularity due to Aśoka, Kaniska, Harsavardhana and other powerful kings."

ruling classes, they gradually took on another form.[377] Thus Zarathushtra and the Buddha were eulogized. Following their death, they became the objects of numerous legends.[378] Priests and monks took the place of the initial founders of the creeds and exaggerated the outward and ritual side of the religion, so that the original perspective was lost.[379] Hierarchy was set in the religious community itself.[380] Gradually the religion was distanced from the people and lost its original revolutionary vocation.

In India, the simple Buddhist monasteries were turned into magnificent establishments with large revenues allocated by the king. Some monks covered themselves with precious ornaments, while some Buddhist groups began performing rites. Monks were even distinguished as to their rank in the monastery.[381] Buddhist arts exposed then "multitude of diademed Bodhisattvas, magnificent women in opulent but highly revealing customs (with)

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[377]Boyce, op. cit., p.120: "Zarathushtrianism evidently developed considerably in this period, growing from a new, revolutionary and imperilled missionary faith into the dominant religion among the eastern Iranians."
Varma, op. cit., p.337.

[378]M.Rahma, "Influence of Legendary Kings and Heroes on Perisian Literature", Indo-Iranica, March 1971, vol.24 no.1 p.51.
Kosambi, op. cit., p.108: "The Sākya chief was elected by rotation, which led to the later fable of the Buddha being born prince."
Glasenapp, Buddhism a Non-Theistic Religion, op.cit., pp.94-95.

[379]Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, op. cit., p.152.
Du Breuil, op. cit., p.209: "La première expansion zoroastrienne n'a pas été édifié de structures religieuses ni de culte de prophète."

[380]Glasenapp, Brahmā et Bouddha, op. cit., p.172.

[381]D.C.Ahir, Heritage of Buddhism, Delhi, B.R.Publishing Corporation, 1989, p.138-139: "When the monasteries became rich...the monks lost close contact with the people."
Kosambi, op. cit., pp.177-178.

handsome male companions...", instead of representing starving beggars or poor villagers.[382] Mahayana Buddhism (a later verision of Buddhism) took back traditional Aryan superstitions, and fabricated a Buddhist pantheon "indistinguishable, except in name, from the Hindu divinities."[383] The gradual changes in Buddhism, and the Brahmanic assimilation of numerous Buddhist ethics (such as the rejection of animal sacrifices) appealing to the society, prepared the decline of Buddhism in India.[384] In Iran, the religion professed by Zarathushtra was not shielded from distortions. The priestly class, probably to appeal to converted Zarathushtrian monarchs, pretended to adopt Zarathushtrianism. In fact they gave no heed to Zarathushtra's precepts and revived the traditional Aryan religion with its Soma rituals and animal sacrifices, so vehemently denounced by Zarathushtra.[385] Even the god Indra, destituted by the Aryan prophet, was restored under the name Verethraghana.[386] The Aryan priests in Iran clung to their prestige and maintained the institution, similar to that of Brahmanic **dakṣiṇās** (gifts), which permitted them to acquire money.[387]

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[382]Kosambi, op. cit., p.179.

[383]Ahir, op. cit., p.140.

[384]Ahir, op. cit., pp.137-138.

[385]Gnoli, op. cit., p.193.

[386]Avesta, Yasht 14.11.
Du Breuil, op. cit., pp.190, 194.
Haug, op. cit., p.213.

[387]Firoze C.Davar, "Indo-Iranian Age", Indo-Iranica, March 1970, vol.23 no.1, pp.68-69.
Boyce, op. cit., pp.133, 141.
Bartholomae, op. cit., pp.3-5.
Zaehner, op. cit., pp.29, 81.

On the eve of the Islamic invasion, which is considered by many as the cause of extinction of Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism in Iran and India, the two reforming religions were already so altered that they no longer reflected the aspirations of the masses.[388] However we are far from saying that Zarathushtra and the Buddha failed in their mission, since there is no textual evidence that indicates both teachers fought to found long-lasting religions. Their main goal was to ameliorate their own society. Their ideas were original, innovative and expedient for their time.[389] Also, they influenced the moral atmosphere of their lands to such an extent that the early Zarathushtrian and early Buddhist kings were exalted for their righteous rule.[390] The later developments of Zarathushtrianism and Buddhism were not the result of innovations but more likely the product of manoeuvres of influential classes.[391]

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[388]Hinduism, The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia, Chicago, Enc.Britannica, 15th Edition, 1992, Vol.20 p.525: "Converision to Islam was more common in areas where Buddhism had once been strongest."
Ahir, op. cit., pp.134-135, 140: "Whatever was left unfinished by the Hindu reactionaries was accomplished by the muslim fanatics."
Kosambi, op. cit., p.180: "The state support that Aśoka had given continued till the end of the twelfth century, when all monastic foundations in the north were finally looted and wiped out by muslims."
Zaehner, op. cit., pp.190-191: "Zoroastrianism was already a dying thing when the Muslims finally administered the coup de grâce."

[389]Kunte, op. cit., p.169: "All social and domestic institutions of a nation are, during one period, under the influence of one idea. For some time the propagation of the dogmas of religion as taught by Gautama Buddha, inspired and moved the masses of the people of India."

[390]Du Breuil, op. cit., p.175: On the reign of the Achaemenid king Cyrus.
Basha, op. cit., p.55: On the rule of king Aśoka.

[391]Zaehner, op. cit., p.171: "It merely shows how political vicissitudes can strangle the life out of even a great religion with a vital message for man and turn it into something wholly different from what the founder had intended."

Appendix

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